DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 162 957 SO 011 365

TITLE	Citizenship: An Overview, 1975-76. Selected Results from the Second Assessment of Citizenship. Report No. 07-C-00.
INSTITUTION	Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colo. National Assessment of Educational Progress.
SPONS AGENCY	National Center for Educational Statistics (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Oct 78
CONTRACT	OEC-0-74-0506
NOTE	67p.; Exhibits 1-21 may not reproduce clearly in hard copy due to small type size of original document; Funding information on inside front cover has been removed by ERIC
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Achievement; Age Groups; Citizen Participation; *Citizenship; Comparative Analysis; Decision Making Skills; Democratic Values; *Educational Assessment; Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; Government Role; *National Surveys; Performance Factors; Social Studies; Tables (Data)

ABSTRACT

A report is presented of a national assessment of young Americans' achievement of citizenship goals. Conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the study measured achievement of six behavioral objectives. These were: (1) show concern for the well-being and dignity of others, (2) support just law and the rights of all individuals, (3) know the main structure and functions of government, (4) participate in democratic civic improvement, (5) understand important world, national, and local civic problems, and (6) approach civic decisions rationally. Students in the survey represented nine-, 13-, and 17-year-old age groups. Chapter one of the report is a summary of citizenship achievement at each age for all six objectives. Chapters two through seven each focus on one of the objectives, discussing overall results for that particular objective and featuring sample questions. The final chapter compares different performance levels among age groups. Tables of data accompany the discussion in all chapters. (Author/AV)

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CITIZENSHIP

An Overview, 1975-76

SELECTED RESULTS FROM THE SECOND ASSESSMENT OF CITIZENSHIP

Report No. 07-C-00

by the
National Assessment of Educational Progress

Education Commission of the States
Suite 700, 1860 Lincoln Street
Denver, Colorado 80295

October 1978

SO-011365

Prepared under contract No. OEC-0-74-0506 with the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Education Division. Contractors undertaking such projects are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment. This report, therefore, does not necessarily represent positions or policies of the Education Division, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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This report is made pursuant to contract No. OEC-0-74-0506. The amount charged to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare for the work resulting in this report (inclusive of the amounts so charged for any prior reports submitted under this contract) is The names of the persons, employed or retained by the contractor, with managerial or professional responsibility for such work, or for the content of the report are as follows: Roy Forbes (see Acknowledgments).

The cost figure cited above represents the total amount of money expended since late 1973 on assessments in art, career and occupational development, reading, writing, social studies/citizenship, science, basic life skills, mathematics and consumerism, resulting, to date, in numerous reports, papers, articles, presentations and assessment materials, many of which are used in state and local assessment programs. A complete list of all such materials is available upon request.

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FOREWORD

When the U.S. Office of Education was chartered in 1867, one charge to its commissioners was to determine the nation's progress in education. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was initiated a century later to address, in a systematic way, that charge.

Each year since 1969, National Assessment has gathered information about levels of educational achievement across the country and reported its findings to the nation. NAEP surveys the educational attainments of 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds, 17-year-olds and young adults (ages 26—35) in 10 learning areas: art, career and occupational development, citizenship, literature, mathematics, music, reading, science, social studies and writing. Different learning areas are assessed every year, and all areas are periodically reassessed in order to measure change in educational achievement. National Assessment has tested more than 630,000 young Americans since 1969.

Learning area assessments evolve from a consensus process. Each assessment is the product of several years of work by a great many educators, scholars and lay persons from all over the nation. Initially, these people design objectives for each subject area, proposing general goals they feel Americans should be achieving in the course of their education. After careful reviews, these objectives are given to exercise (item) writers, whose task it is to create measurement tools appropriate to the objectives.

When the exercises have passed extensive reviews by subject-matter specialists, measurement experts and lay persons, they are administered to probability samples. The people who compose these samples are chosen in such a way that the results of their assessment can be generalized to an entire national population. That is, on the basis of the actual performance of about 2,500 9-year-olds on a given exercise, we can generalize about the probable performance of all 9-year-olds in the nation.

After assessment data have been collected, scored and analyzed, National Assessment publishes reports to disseminate the results as widely as possible. Not all exercises are released for publication. Because NAEP will readminister some of the same exercises in the future to determine whether the performance level of Americans has increased, remained stable or decreased, it is essential that they not be released in order to preserve the integrity of the study.

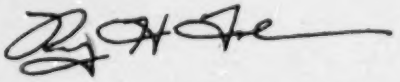
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many organizations and individuals have made substantial contributions to the citizenship/social studies assessment. Unfortunately, it is not possible to acknowledge them all here, and an apology is due to those whose names have been omitted.

The objectives and many exercises in the area of citizenship were prepared by the American Institutes for Research, Palo Alto, California. Richard Hulsart of the National Assessment staff coordinated the development of additional exercises by consultants. All materials were reviewed by educators, subject-matter specialists, interested lay persons and consultants under the general guidance of the National Assessment staff.

The administration of the citizenship/social studies assessment was conducted by the Research Triangle Institute, Raleigh, North Carolina. Scoring and processing were carried out by the Measurement Research Center, Iowa City, Iowa, under the direction of National Assessment staff.

The actual preparation of this report was a collaborative effort. Special thanks must be given to the following people and departments: Data Processing Department for data processing support; Valerie Daniels for technical proofreading; Marci Reser and Paula Pitchford for production; Ina Mullis and Ida Brooks Butler for technical planning and analysis. The report was written by Gerald Marriner.



Roy H. Forbes
Director

INTRODUCTION

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) citizenship objectives assert that the foundation of a democracy is an alert citizenry aware of its rights and willing to shoulder attendant responsibilities. As a "government of the people, by the people, for the people," it is implicit that our nation depend upon the participation of an educated and informed public in order to survive and prosper. Do young Americans recognize their rights and liberties, and are they willing to defend the rights and liberties of all their fellow citizens? Do they treat others with respect and support equal opportunities in education, housing, employment and recreation? Do they understand the organization of their government and how it functions, and are they willing to participate in governmental processes?

In an attempt to answer these kinds of questions and to ascertain young Americans' strengths regarding citizenship goals, National Assessment asked a number of questions to 9-, 13- and 17-year-olds from around the country. These questions were developed to measure student achievement of citizenship goals, which were determined to be desirable by a diverse group of people. They were not developed to mandate behaviors or value systems. Six major objectives were identified:

I. Show concern for the well-being and dignity of others.

II. Support just law and the rights of all individuals.

III. Know the main structure and functions of their governments.

IV. Participate in democratic civic improvement.

V. Understand important world, national and local civic problems.

VI. Approach civic decisions rationally.

Each objective is further defined by several subobjectives. (See Chapters 2 through 7).

Chapter 1 provides a summary of citizenship achievement at each age over all six objectives. Chapters 2—7 each focus on one of the objectives, discussing overall results for that particular objective and featuring individual exercises. A final chapter compares different performance levels among age groups.

The data in this report represent estimates of the achievement levels of students for individual items and for sets of items. The item-level data represent the percentages of individuals of a given age or in a given group who successfully answered particular items. The means found in this report are averages of the percentages of correct responses over a given set of items. In most cases, the same items were not administered at all age levels. Some were given only to students at one age level; others were administered to students at two different age levels; in only a few instances did students from all three age groups respond to the same questions. Consequently, one cannot draw comparisons between or among national means for each age because each mean was calculated using a different group of items. However, examples of representative items administered to more than one age group appear in the chapters describing individual objectives, and the final chapter presents data on 13- and 17-year-olds from which comparisons might be drawn. While including results for some items presented in other National Assessment reports

about citizenship and social studies,[1] this report discusses items as they relate to the citizenship objectives, providing teachers and curriculum specialists with a picture of how well students are accomplishing some major citizenship goals.

Like all statistical representations, the data in this report provide an incomplete picture because the entire population was not assessed. The particular sample in this survey is only one of a large number of possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same sample design. The mean percents correct computed from these different samples could well differ from each other. In order to estimate the effect of this sampling variability on the results, National Assessment calculated standard errors. Group performance[2] is described in this report only when a group's performance percentage differs from the nation's by at least two standard errors. Using this statistical convention, we are confident that the reported differences would occur in 95 out of 100 samples drawn, and are thus not the result of sampling variability.

In Chapters 1 through 7, mean results at each age level are graphically displayed for the nation and the various National Assessment reporting groups. A comparison of 13- and 17-year-olds' performance on the items administered at both ages is graphically displayed in Chapter 8.

---

[1] *Education for Citizenship: A Bicentennial Survey* (Denver, Colo.: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1976); *Changes in Political Knowledge and Attitudes, 1969–76* (Denver, Colo.: National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1978).

[2] National Assessment reports group results by geographical region, sex, race, level of parental education, grade level, type of community and size of community. See the appendix for definitions of the NAEP reporting groups.

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS

This chapter provides a brief summary of the overall national citizenship achievement of students at each age level as well as performance patterns for various groups at each age. Since levels of performance for certain groups are fairly uniform over most of the items, overall patterns of performance for these groups are discussed in this chapter and highlighted in later chapters only when they vary from standard patterns of performance.

The national mean for overall performance (the mean percentage of correct or acceptable responses on all citizenship exercises) for 9-year-olds was 62%; for 13-year-olds, 63%; and for 17-year-old students, 67%. Exhibits 1, 2 and 3 display mean national performances and mean performances for various population groups for each age level. (See the appendix at the end of this report for complete descriptions of these population groups.)

In these exhibits — one for each age level — the national mean percentage of success is indicated by the horizontal, broken line across the graphs. Mean percentages for different groups are indicated as bars. The bars are displayed in seven groups: the regions of the country (NE=Northeast, C=Central, W=West, SE=Southeast); sex (M=male, F=female); race (W=white, B=black, H=Hispanic[1]); level of parental education (NG=not graduated high school, GH=graduated high school, PH=post high school); community type (ER=extreme rural, LM=low metropolitan, HM=high metropolitan); community size (BC=big city, FBC=fringes around big cities, MC=medium city, SP=smaller places); and grade level in school (3=3rd grade, 4=4th grade, >4=higher than 4th grade, 7=7th grade, 8=8th grade, >8=higher than 8th grade, 10=10th grade, 11=11th grade, 12=12th grade).

A comparison of the mean achievement for various groups with the national mean achievement on the same exercises leads to the following observations: The number of years that a student had attended school was related to performance at all age levels. For example, among 9-year-olds, those in the 3rd grade were 5 points below their national mean, 4th graders at age 9 were 2 points above it and 9-year-olds beyond the 4th grade were 11 points above it (57%, 64% and 73%, respectively). Achievement for the other age groups by grade followed a similar pattern. The mean for 13-year-olds in the 7th grade was 58%, compared with 66% for 8th graders and 71% for 13-year-olds beyond the 8th grade. Among 17-year-old students, those in the 10th grade registered 58%; 11th graders, 69%; and those beyond the 11th grade, 73%.

There was no difference in overall performance between males and females. Nine- and 13-year-old students from the Northeast and 13- and 17-year-olds from the Central states performed above the national means. Students from the Southeast performed below the national level at all ages. Differences in performances among races were more noticeable than regional differences. White students scored 2 points above the national means at each age level, while black and Hispanic students scored 7 or 8 points below the means.

[1] Hispanic achievement data will not be reported for individual exercises because too few Hispanic students responded to any one item.

EXHIBIT 1. Mean Performance of 9-Year-Olds on All Citizenship Items
(Number of Items = 120)

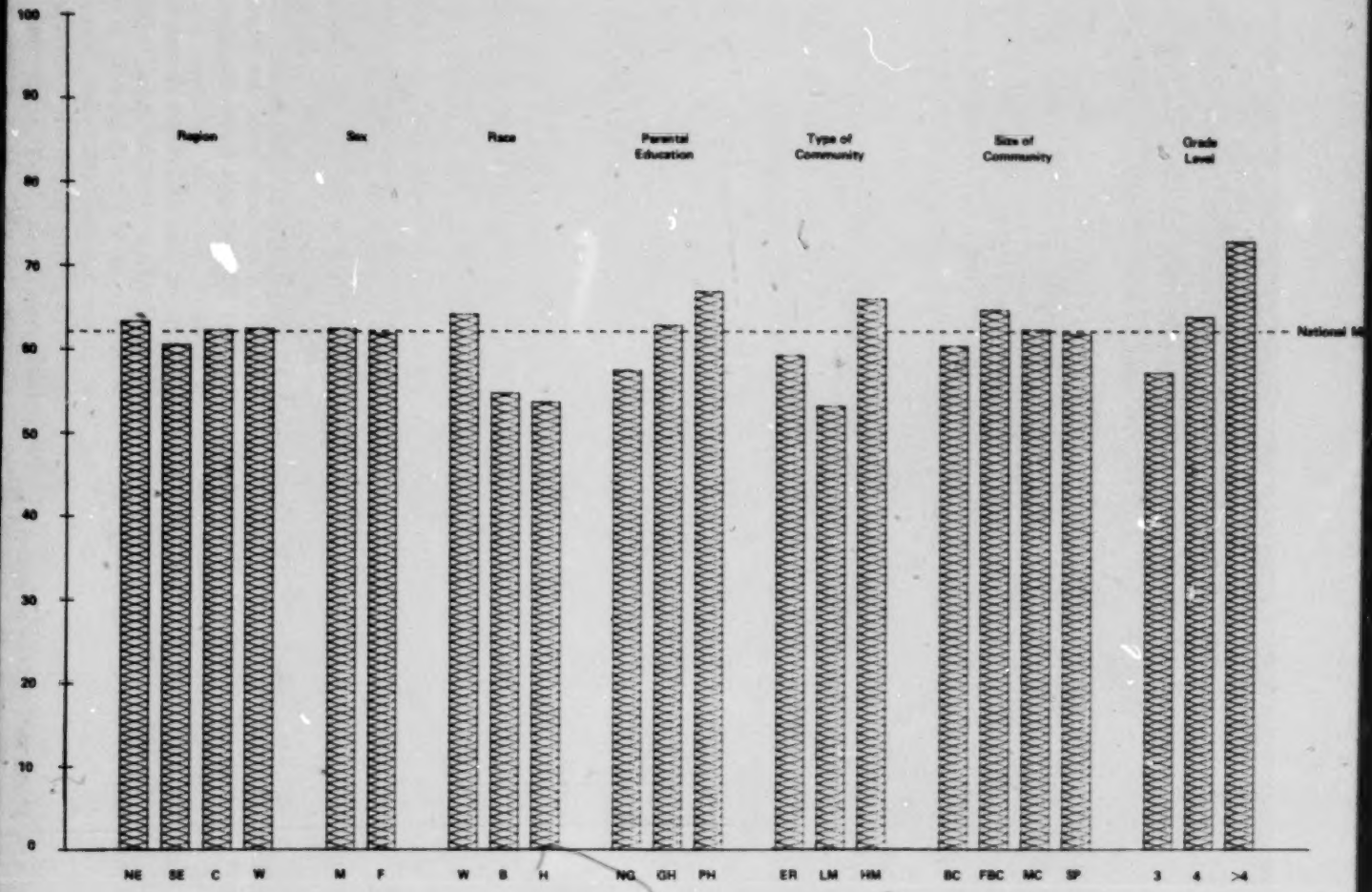


EXHIBIT 2. Mean Performance of 13-Year-Olds on All Citizenship Items
(Number of Items = 243)

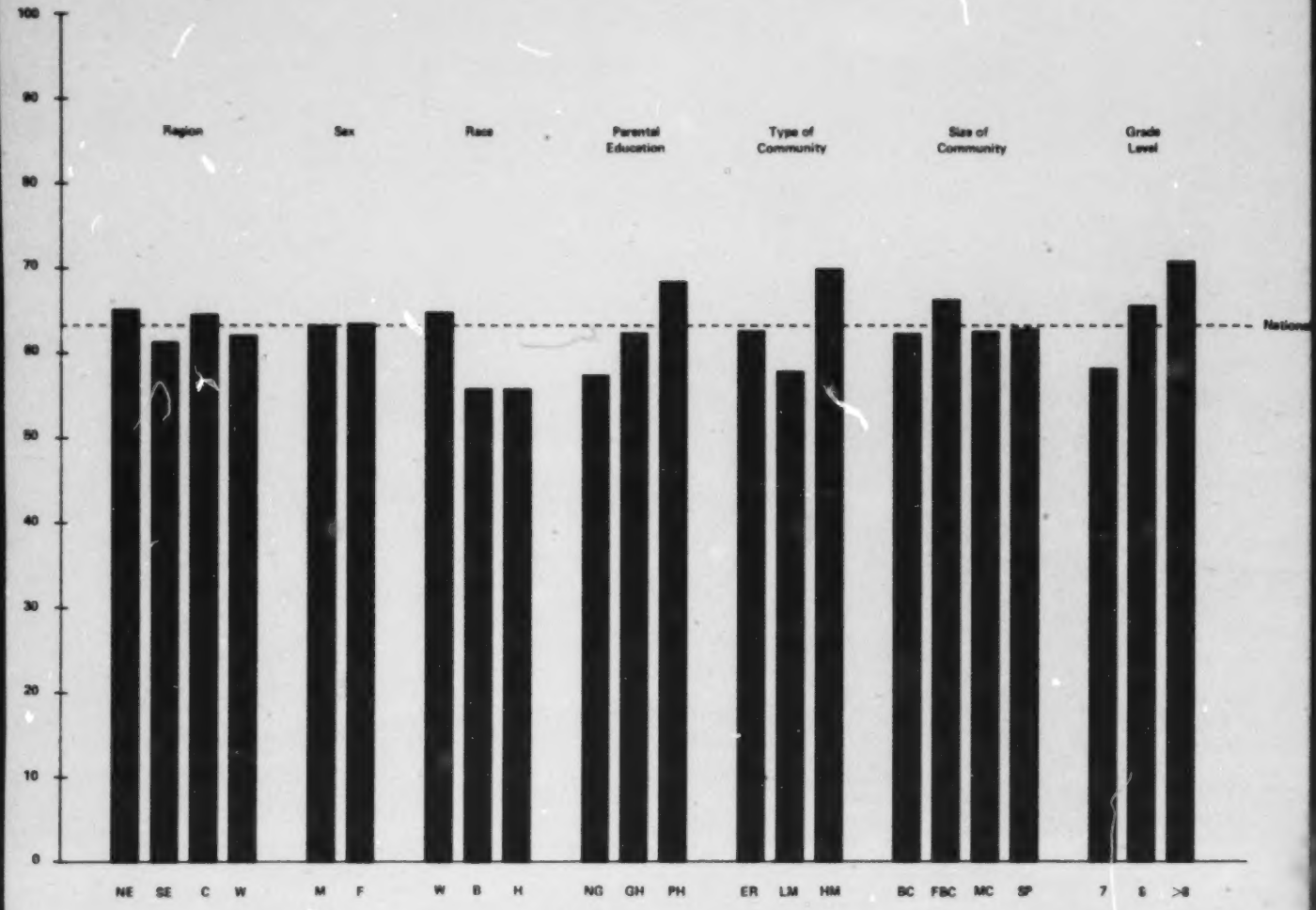
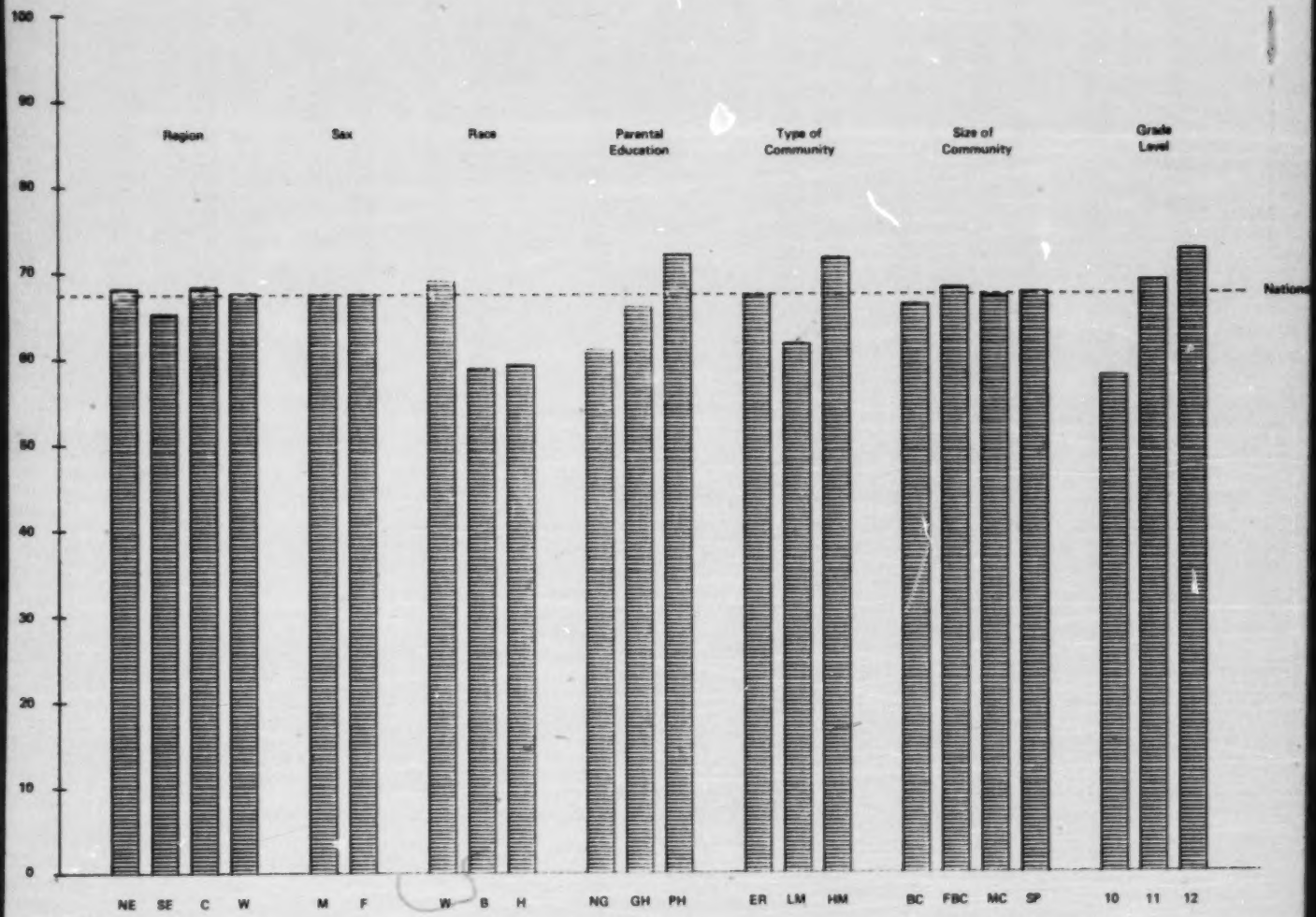


EXHIBIT 3. Mean Performance of 17-Year-Olds on All Citizenship Items
(Number of Items = 253)



The level of their parents' education, as reported by the students, was related to their citizenship achievement at all ages. Students whose parents were high school graduates registered within a point of the national means at each age. If their parents had not graduated from high school, they registered 5 or 6 points below the means. By contrast, students whose parents had had some education beyond high school scored 5 points above the national means at each age.

An analysis of the type of community in which students lived also revealed a wide range of performance levels. Students from the affluent urban and suburban communities (high metro) performed well above the national level and students from low-income urban areas (low metro), the furthest below it. Rural students registered at the national mean except for 9-year-olds, who averaged 3 points below it. Nine- and 13-year-old students living in urbanized areas near big cities performed significantly better than did their peers living in communities of other sizes.

As the following table illustrates, 13- and 17-year-olds who discussed politics frequently performed better on citizenship exercises than students at the same ages who discussed politics only rarely.

Mean Percent Acceptable on All Citizenship Items for Those Discussing Politics Rarely, Moderately and Frequently at Ages 9, 13 and 17

Politics Discussed	All Citizenship Exercises		
	9-Year-Olds	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
Rarely	62.1%	58.7%	62.4%
Moderately	64.6	63.8	67.0
Frequently	60.8	67.5	70.8

Seventeen-year-olds who had studied political issues a good deal performed significantly higher (74%) than students who had not studied them much (62%) or students who had only studied them a bit (68%).

The data illustrate that differences in achievement for various groups of students were prevalent. Socioeconomic factors such as ethnicity, parental education or community type appeared to be related to the achievement level that students attained on these citizenship exercises.

CHAPTER 2

OBJECTIVE I: SHOW CONCERN FOR THE WELL-BEING AND DIGNITY OF OTHERS

The first citizenship objective, "Show concern for the well-being and dignity of others," was divided into the following subobjectives:

A. Treat others with respect.

B. Consider the consequences of one's own actions for others.

C. Guard the safety and health of others.

D. Offer help to others in need.

E. Support equal opportunity in education, housing, employment and recreation.

F. Show loyalty to country, to friends and to other groups whose values they share.

G. Be ethical and dependable in work, school and social situations.

Nearly two-thirds of the exercises administered to students addressed either Subobjective A or E.

On Objective I, student performance at all three ages was well above overall national performance for all citizenship exercises. Although group achievement generally did not deviate from the overall group patterns, there was one notable exception. Females' performance on the items in Objective I was significantly higher than that of males at all ages. The differences between males' and females' achievement were especially marked among 13- and 17-year-old students — 4 points' difference for 9-year-olds, 9 points for 13-year-olds and 9 points for 17-year-olds. (See Exhibits 4, 5 and 6.)

Do students treat others with respect? To answer this question, students were asked a number of questions. For example, 9-year-olds were given this situation:

> George had polio. Now he wears braces on his legs and he can't run very fast. If you knew George was wishing he could play baseball with you, what would you do?

Eighty-five percent of the students gave an acceptable response to this multiple-choice question. Their choices, and the percentages of students citing each, are:

Pretend you didn't know George wanted to play baseball, and play with your friends.	1.3%
Ask George to be the catcher and have somebody run for him when he's at bat.	85.4
Tell George he can't play because he can't run.	5.8
I don't know.	7.3†

†Column might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

Thirteen-year-old and 17-year-old students were asked:

> If you just met someone who was Oriental, how sure would you be that the person could be trusted?

EXHIBIT 4. Mean Performance of 9-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective I
(Number of Items = 28)

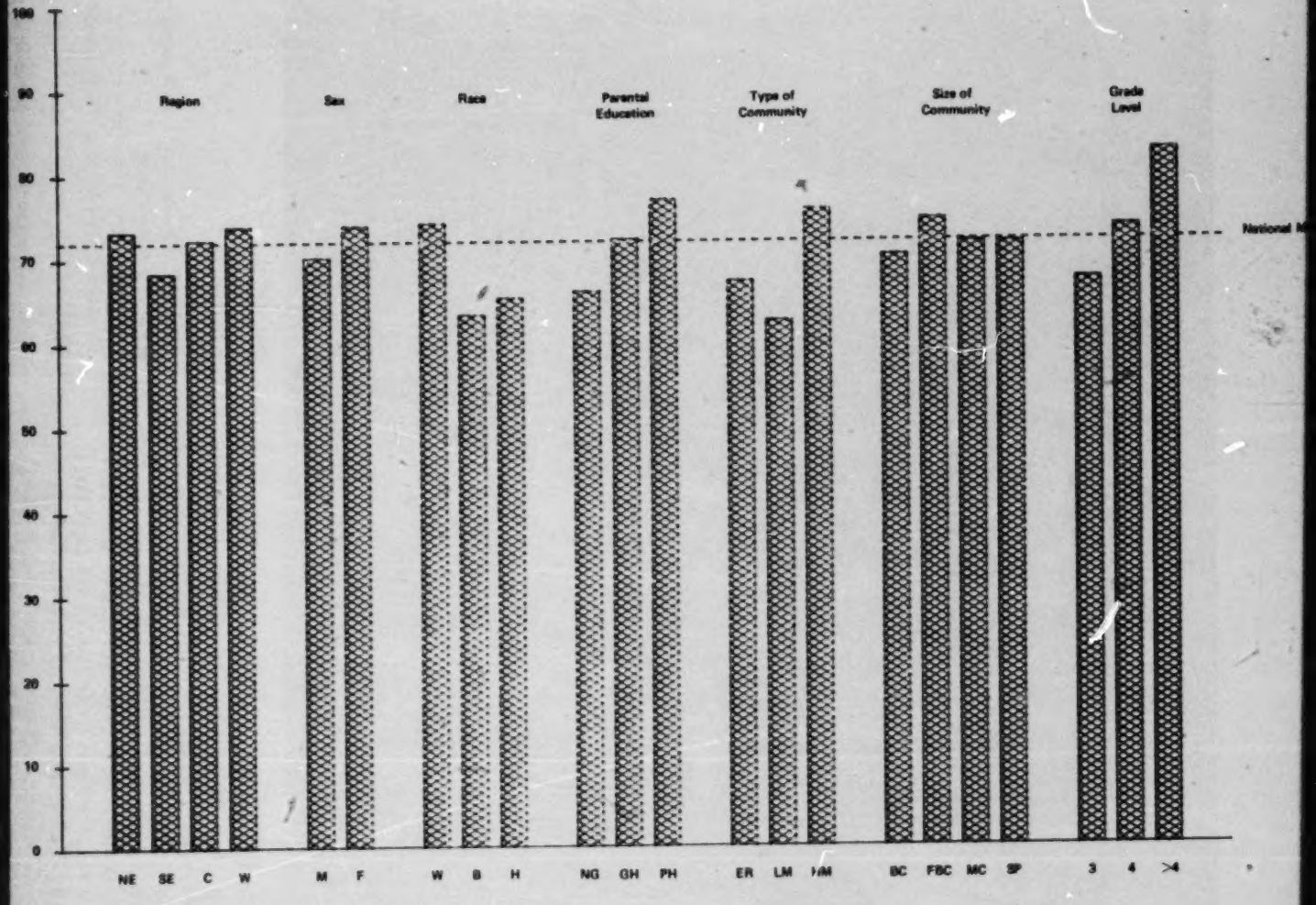


EXHIBIT 5. Mean Performance of 13-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective I
(Number of Items = 37)

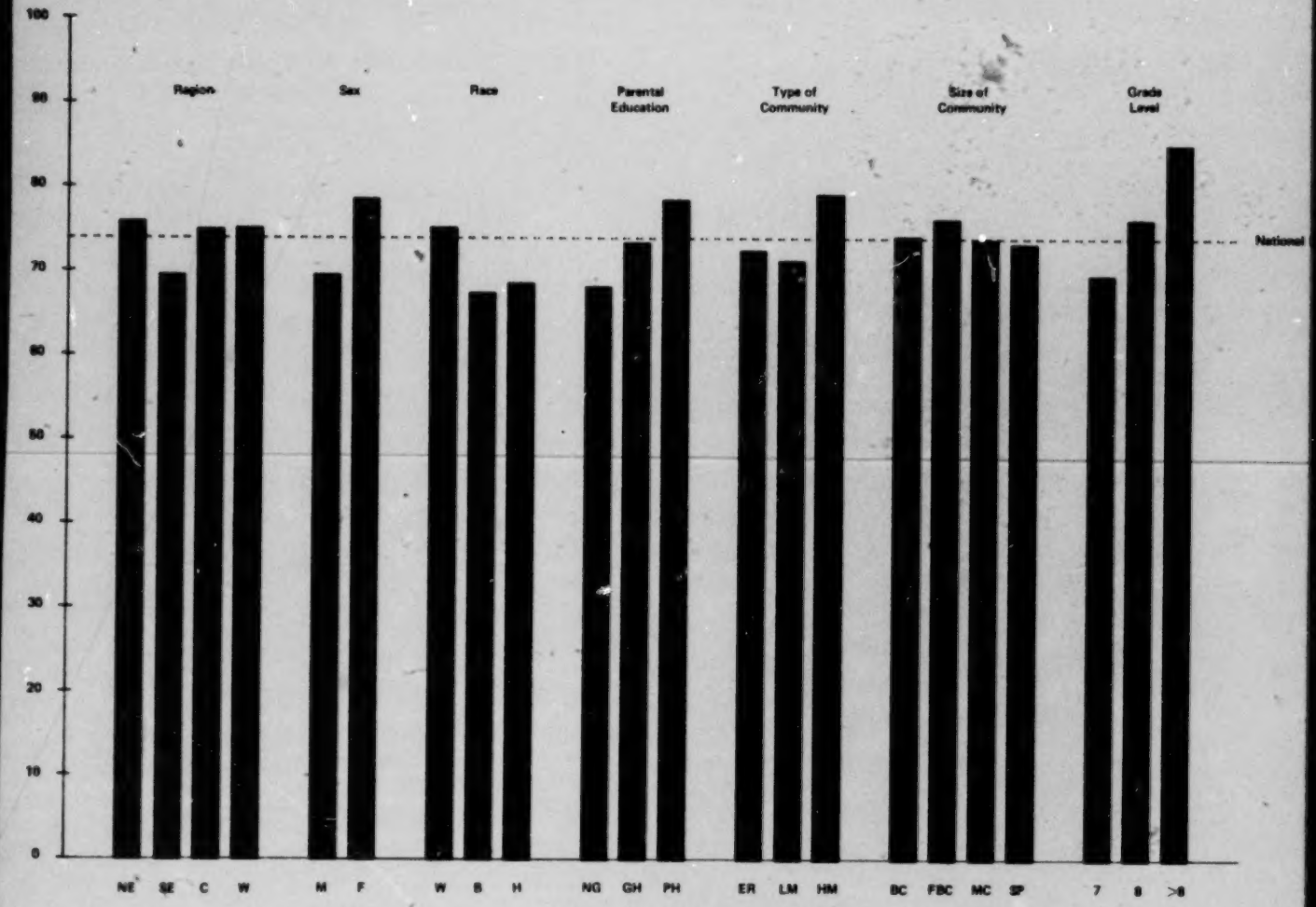
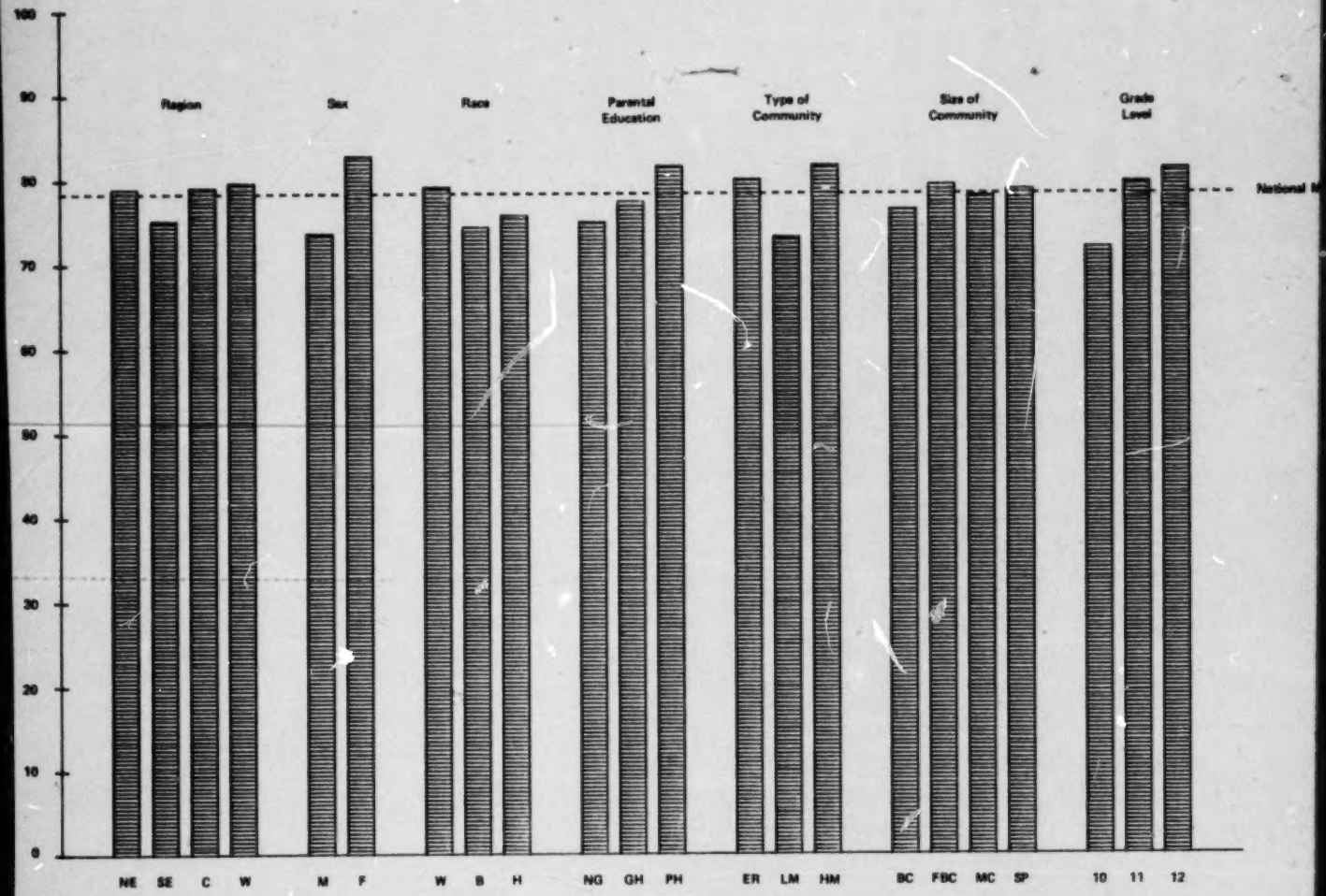


EXHIBIT 6. Mean Performance of 17-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective I
(Number of Items = 33)



The same question was asked with reference to black and white persons. The choice of answers provided in each case was identical.

I would be sure that the person could be trusted.

I would be sure that the person could NOT be trusted.

I wouldn't be able to say one way or the other if the person could be trusted.

The desired response with respect to the objective was that the individual would not be able to say one way or the other. Seventeen-year-olds performed slightly higher on this item than 13-year-olds. Whites registered higher than blacks, but the differences in performance by race declined markedly at age 17. The percentages of acceptable responses for each item by age and race are given in the following table:

	13-Year-Olds			17-Year-Olds		
	National	White	Black	National	White	Black
How Sure Would You Be That an Oriental Person Could Be Trusted?						
Couldn't say one way or another	94.0%	95.1%	90.0%	95.5%	95.9%	95.8%
How Sure Would You Be That a Black Person Could Be Trusted?						
Couldn't say one way or another	90.8	92.3	82.3	93.9	94.2	91.0
How Sure Would You Be That a White Person Could Be Trusted?						
Couldn't say one way or another	90.5	92.4	80.4	94.6	95.2	91.5

Another item asked:

Would you want to have a person of a different skin color sit next to you in school every day?

Would you want to have a person of a different skin color be your teacher?

Would you want to have a person of a different skin color be your friend?

Based on the results for these items, the percentage of students willing to treat others with respect increased from age 9 to age 13 and from age 13 to age 17. Furthermore, a higher percentage of 13- and 17-year-old blacks were willing to do so than were white 13- and 17-year-olds. The percentages of acceptable responses by age and race are cited below:

	9-Year-Olds			13-Year-Olds			17-Year-Olds		
	National	White	Black	National	White	Black	National	White	Black
Would You Want To Sit Beside a Person of a Different Skin Color?									
Yes	54.9%	54.8%	49.3%	62.0%	60.2%	70.5%	69.0%	67.2%	75.7%
Would You Want To Have a Person of a Different Skin Color Be Your Teacher?									
Yes	52.0	50.8	57.4	66.1	64.3	74.2	74.2	73.2	76.1
Would You Want To Have a Person of a Different Skin Color Be Your Friend?									
Yes	74.0	75.8	65.6	82.8	81.8	86.4	85.1	84.3	88.5

While most students said they would like to have a friend of a different skin color, considerably fewer wanted such a person for a teacher or were willing to sit beside that person in school each day.

To determine whether youths considered the consequences of their own actions on others, 9- and 13-year-olds were asked if the following situations were true or not true about themselves:

> If I'm playing at a friend's house and break something, I try to put it where he or she won't notice it.

> If someone else gets blamed for something I did, I step forward and take the blame.

Approximately three out of four respondents at each age said the first statement was not true of themselves. In the second example, slightly over half the students in each age group said they would step forward and take the blame.

Another aspect of showing concern for the well-being and dignity of others is offering help to others when they are in need. Nine-year-olds were asked, "Can you think of a boy or girl who has come into your class since school started — a boy or girl who just moved here and didn't go to your school last year?" Seventy-one percent of the students answered affirmatively. To a second question, "Have you ever helped a new boy or girl meet people or learn about the school?" 53% of the 9-year-olds said that they had. What did they do? About two-fifths of the students who offered to help showed them around the school, pointing out where the classrooms and restrooms were located. About one-fourth said they had introduced the newcomer to their friends and classmates. Others helped them with their school work, explained school rules or played with them and became friends.

Seventeen-year-olds were given this situation:

> Suppose you see a stranger slashing the tires of a car. Would you report and describe that person to the police?

Sixty-seven percent of the 17-year-olds said they would, 10% said they would not and 22% were undecided. Students from the West (76%) were more willing to report the incident than those from the Northeastern (67%), Southeastern (64%) or Central states (60%). Seventeen-year-olds from extreme-rural (76%) or high-metropolitan (75%) areas were also more likely to call the police. Sixty-nine percent of white respondents and 50% of black respondents said they would report the vandalism.

A number of the exercises were administered to determine whether students supported equal opportunity in education, housing, employment and recreation. Nine-, 13- and 17-year-olds were asked:

> Should women get the same pay as men for doing the same work?

Eighty-six percent of the 9-year-olds thought they should; 95% of the 13-year-olds and 95% of the 17-year-olds also responded affirmatively. The difference between male and female responses was slight for 9-year-olds but increased noticeably at each of the higher age levels. Among 13-year-olds, 5% more females than males responded affirmatively. At age 17, 8% more females than males thought that women should receive the same pay as men for doing the same work.

A five-part exercise administered to 13- and 17-year-olds asked the following:

> Do you think getting a job should depend on your SEX?

Considerably more females than males thought it should not and the gap widened with age. The percentages of "no" responses according to age and sex are:

National	Male	Female
	13-Year-Olds	
85.6%	79.5%	91.3%

	17-Year-Olds	
87.4	80.6	93.8

There was little improvement in the attitudes of males and females between ages 13 and 17.

Do you think getting a job should depend on your SKIN COLOR?

More black than white students thought it should not. The percentages of respondents who did not think getting a job should depend on race are:

National	White	Black
	13-Yea.-Olds	
97.4%	97.3%	99.1%
	17-Year-Olds	
97.0	96.8	97.9

Do you think getting a job should depend on your ABILITIES and SKILLS?

Most of the 13-year-olds (94%) and the 17-year-olds (94%) answered affirmatively.

Do you think getting a job should depend on your POLITICAL OPINIONS?

Eighty-two percent of the 13-year-olds and 92% of the 17-year-olds rejected the notion that getting a job should depend on one's political opinions. The difference in performance between whites and blacks at age 13 was unusually large (whites registered 22 points higher than blacks) but narrowed considerably by age 17 (10 points).

Do you think getting a job should depend on your RELIGION?

Ninety-six percent of the 13-year-olds and 98% of the 17-year-olds supported freedom of religion by answering "no." From their answers to this five-part exercise, one can see that most students think getting a job should depend on one's abilities and skills rather than on any form of discrimination. Males displayed their greatest bias in regard to females' right to enter the job market, and 13-year-olds were least tolerant of those with supposedly different political opinions.

All age groups responded to the following exercise:

Do you feel a family should be able to move into a part of town where people of a different skin color live?

Multiple-choice responses included:

Only if the people who live in that part of town want the family to move in.

The family should be able to move in; skin color shouldn't make any difference.

The family should not even look for a place to live in that part of town.

Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were more likely than 9-year-olds to reply that the family should be able to move in and that skin color should not make any difference. Thirteen- and 17-year-old blacks gave this answer more frequently than 9-year-old blacks and more often than white youths their own ages. The percentages of those responding that the family should be able to move in are shown in the following table by age and race:

National	White	Black
	9-Year-Olds	
80.3%	83.7%	64.0%
	13-Year-Olds	
91.3	91.1	94.8
	17-Year-Olds	
90.0	89.0	97.0

In an open-ended exercise administered to 13- and 17-year-olds, students were told:

As we know, there are groups in our country who don't have the same chance to get as good

an education as other groups. Unequal chances for education can affect our whole country.

List four ways it would help our country if everyone could get a good education.

Seventy-one percent of the 13-year-olds and 82% of the 17-year-olds offered at least one acceptable response; 51% of the 13-year-olds and 70% of the 17-year-olds gave at least two; and 28% of the 13-year-olds and 50% of the 17-year-olds wrote at least three acceptable answers.

The most frequently cited reason among both age groups was related to employment. Thirteen-year-olds' answers included: "It would help more people have a better opportunity to a good job" and "Good jobs for all races." "It would lead to better jobs and less unemployment," noted a 17-year-old. Students next mentioned economic advantages that the country would enjoy as a result of better education for all. "There would be less poverty," "There wouldn't be anybody that needed welfare" and "There would be fewer slums" were typical of the responses from 13-year-olds. Seventeen-year-olds offered similar answers: "It would raise the standard of living," "There would not be as many slums," "There might not be as many poor" and "Less welfare for our government." Other reasons suggested by students why the country would benefit if everyone could get a good education included better government, improvements in interpersonal communications and attitudes, scientific and technological advances, a decrease in crime and violence, self-improvement, an increasing awareness about environmental problems and improved international relations.

From their answers to the exercises in this chapter, one can infer that most students do treat others with respect. The concern shown for the well-being and dignity of persons of other races seems to increase with age. However, males' respect for equality of the sexes does not grow appreciably with age. Females, though, particularly among the older students, tend to see themselves as the equals of males.

CHAPTER 3

OBJECTIVE II: SUPPORT JUST LAW AND THE RIGHTS OF ALL INDIVIDUALS

The second citizenship objective, "Support just law and the rights of all individuals," was broken into the following subobjectives:

A. Understand the need for law.

B. Recognize specific constitutional rights and liberties.

C. Defend rights and liberties of all kinds of people.

D. Encourage ethical and lawful behavior in others.

E. Comply with public laws.

F. Oppose unjust rules, laws and authority by lawful means.

Identical exercises were not administered to all three age levels, in most instances. Group performances on Objective II generally reflected the overall national patterns for each age, with few exceptions. Most notable was the difference in performance between males and females at ages 9 and 13. The margins were not great but were statistically significant, as males registered higher than females. In contrast, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of 17-year-old males and females. (See Exhibits 7, 8 and 9.)

Many exercises were designed to measure whether students understand the need for law and if they recognize specific constitutional rights and liberties. The percentages of correct or acceptable answers varied widely with individual exercises, but older students consistently performed higher than the younger ones on those items administered to more than one age group. In an exercise given to all three age groups, students were asked two questions:

> DOES the President have the right to stop the radio, television and newspapers from saying bad things about him?
>
> SHOULD the President have the right to stop the radio, television and newspapers from saying bad things about him?

Fifty-five percent of the 9-year-olds, 80% of the 13-year-olds and 87% of the 17-year-olds said that the President has no right to censor radio, television and newspapers. To the second question, 45% of the 9-year-olds, 66% of the 13-year-olds and 77% of the 17-year-olds responded that the President should not have the right to censor the media. Nevertheless, many students, especially at ages 9 and 13, believed that the President could or should have that right.

In a related exercise, 13- and 17-year-olds were asked three questions about the prerogatives of the legislative branch of government.

> Does Congress have the right to pass a law that every adult in the country has to double the amount of income tax paid to the government?

Forty-one percent of the 13-year-olds and 46% of the 17-year-olds acknowledged that the U.S. Congress has that right.

> Does Congress have the right to pass a law to establish a national church?

EXHIBIT 7. Mean Performance of 9-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective II
(Number of Items = 25)

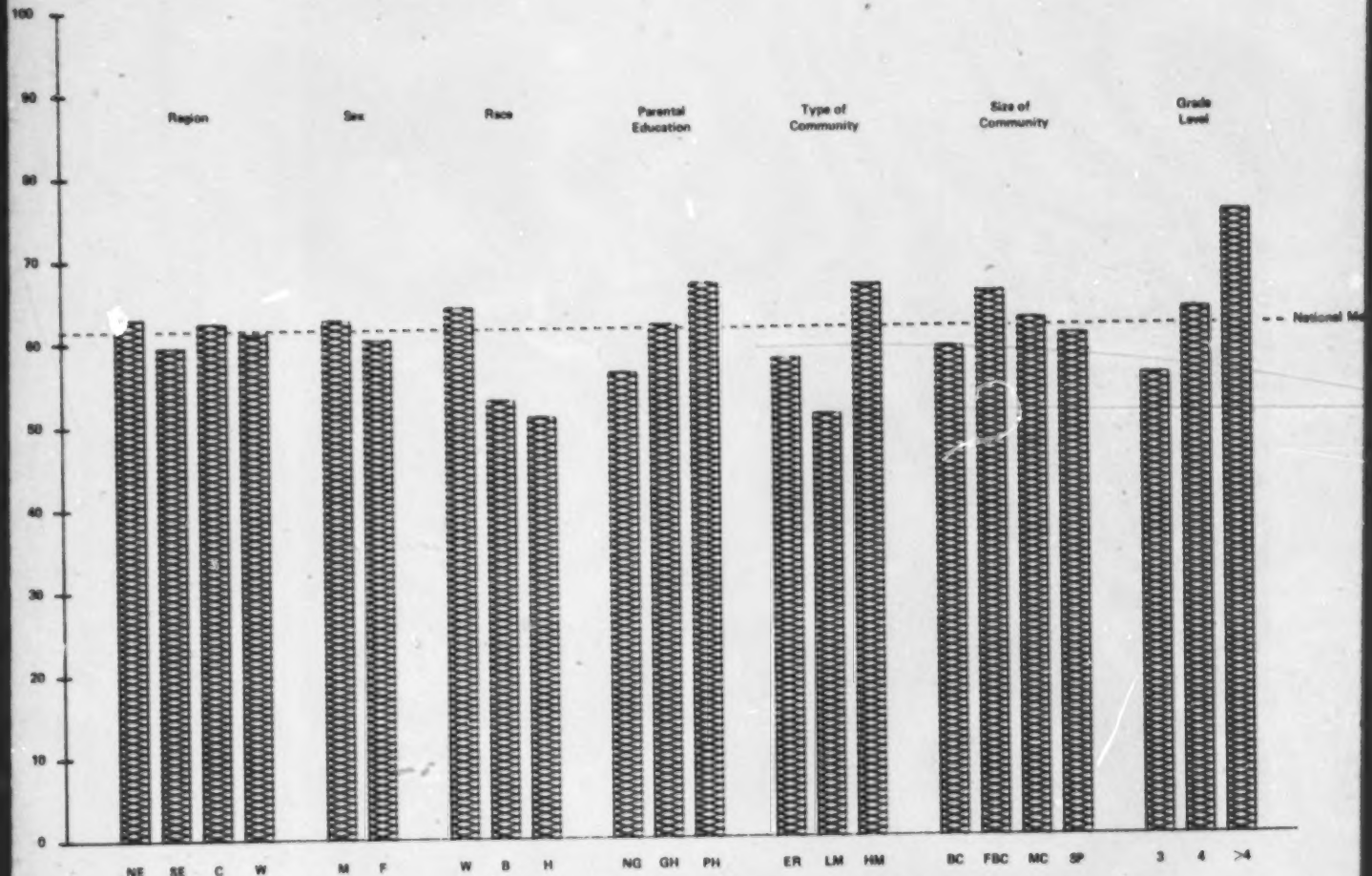


EXHIBIT 8. Mean Performance of 13-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective II
(Number of Items = 75)

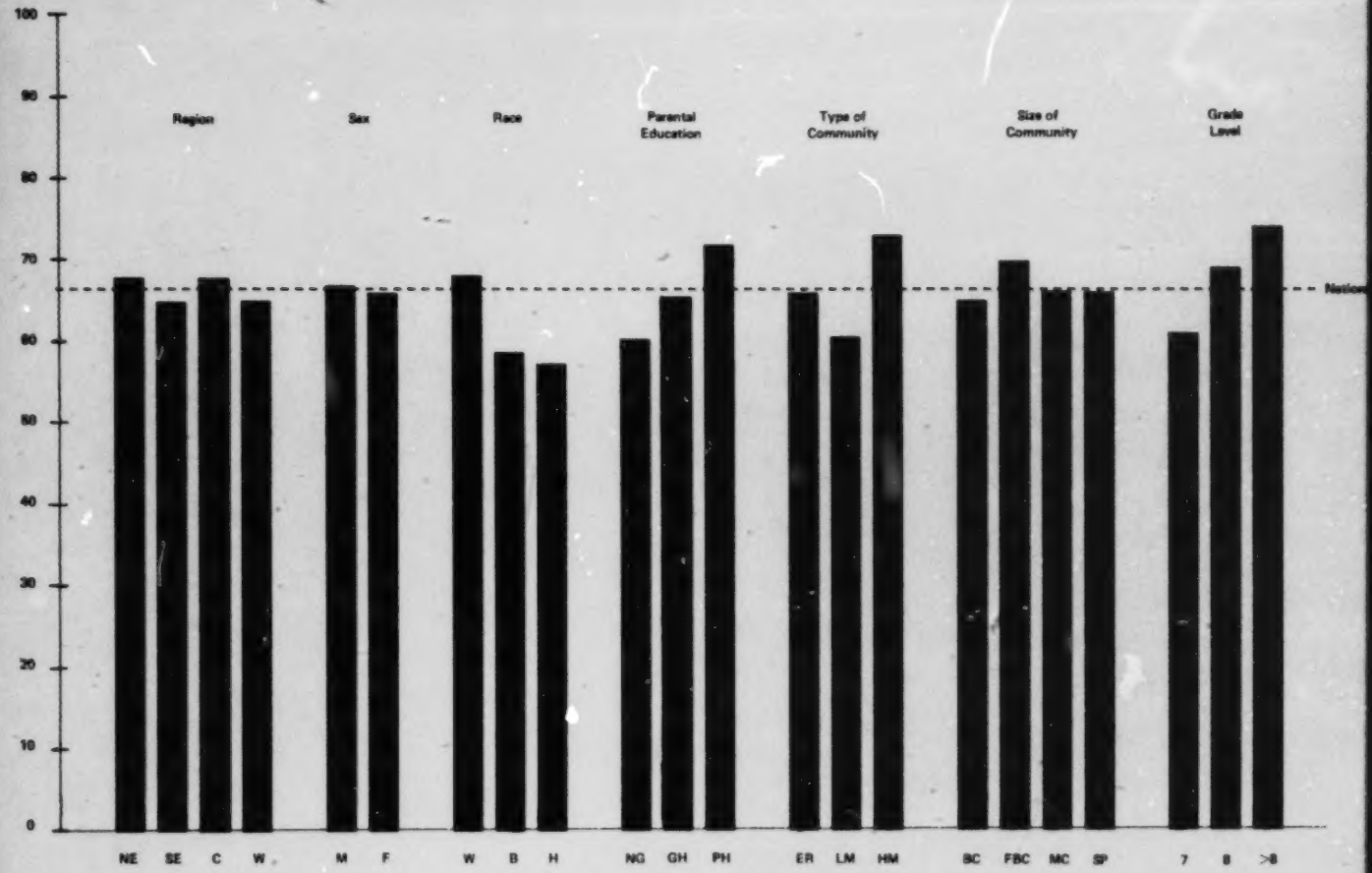
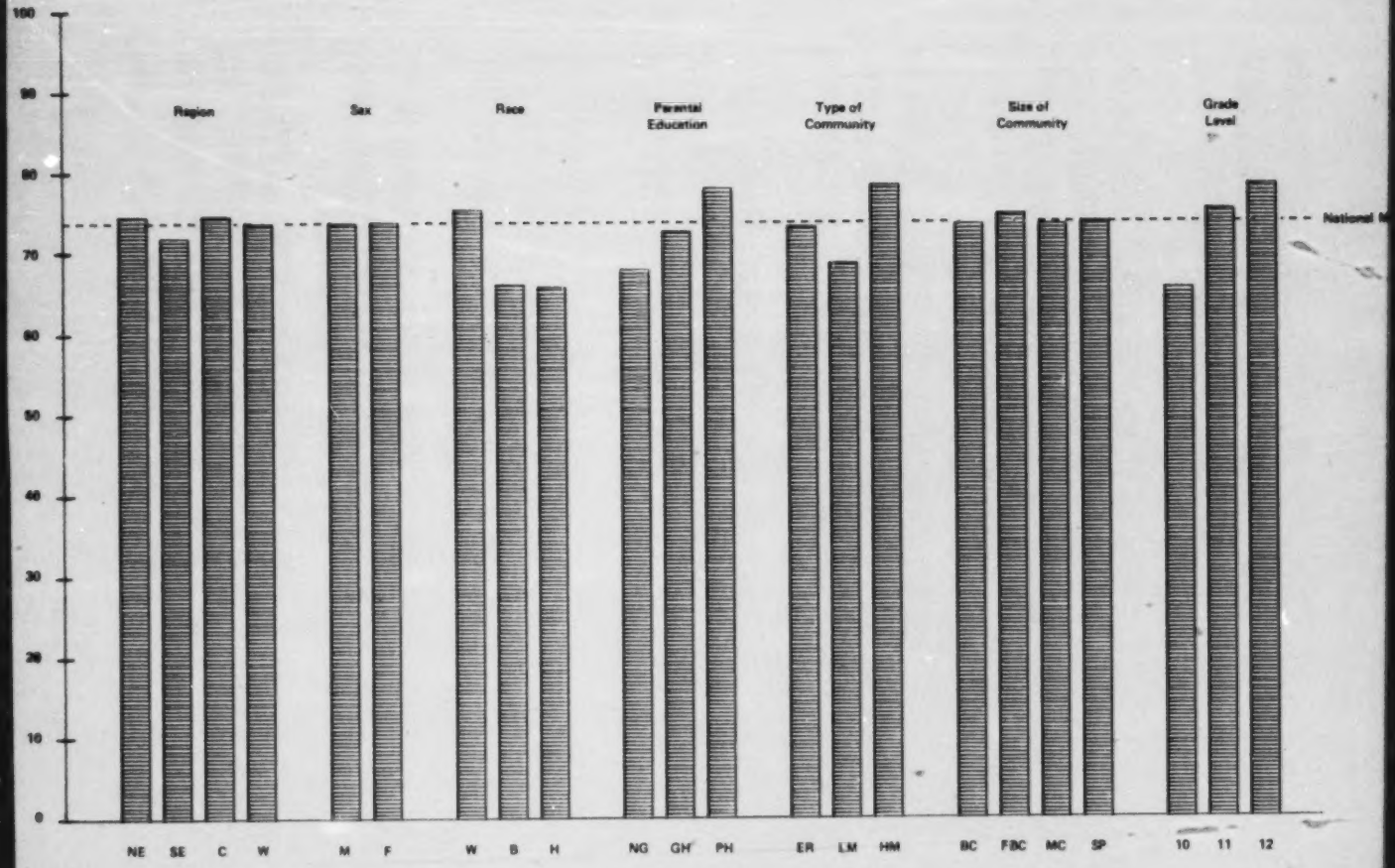


EXHIBIT 9. Mean Performance of 17-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective II
(Number of Items = 76)



Sixty-nine percent of the 13-year-olds and 82% of the 17-year-olds were aware that Congress has no such right, in regard to a national church.

> Does Congress have the right to pass a law that a newspaper cannot criticize the President or Congress?

Seventy-two percent of the 13-year-olds and 83% of the 17-year-olds said that Congress does not have the right to pass a law preventing such criticism. The high percentages of correct answers to the last two parts of this exercise indicate that 13- and 17-year-olds were more aware of the constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and freedom of the press than they were of the taxing powers of Congress.

Questions concerning freedom of religion and freedom of the press came up in other exercises. Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were asked:

> Should a person who believes there is no God be allowed to express his views publicly?

Sixty percent of the 13-year-olds and 75% of the 17-year-olds agreed that the person should be allowed to express his views publicly. But neither age displayed the same level of tolerance when asked:

> Should a person who does not believe in God be allowed to hold a public office?

The percentages of positive answers for the two ages dropped to 49% and 66%.

Their defense of freedom of the press was less than unanimous when measured by the following exercise:

> Should a newspaper or magazine be allowed to publish something that criticizes an elected government official?

Fifty-four percent of the 13-year-olds and 67% of the 17-year-olds felt that the media should be allowed to publish something critical.

A large majority of 17-year-olds opposed the notion of censorship as presented in this exercise:

> Some authors have written books arguing that democracy is a bad form of government. Do you think libraries in our country should be allowed to have these books for everyone to read?

Eighty-one percent of the students thought that libraries should be allowed to make these books available to the public, and 76% gave an acceptable response when asked for a reason for their answers.

Over two-thirds of the 17-year-olds offering an acceptable response gave reasons citing their right to freedom of choice – the fact that the United States is a free country and that they should be able to read what they choose. "People have a right to read what they want," stated one student. "Because each person should have the right to decide what books to read and whether that book is completely true or not," argued another. "The public should be able to make up their own minds by weighing all the facts," stated another 17-year-old. Others simply argued that the freedoms of speech and press give them the right to form their own opinions on the value of democracy as a form of government.

How familiar are students with the constitutional guarantee of the right to vote and the freedom a citizen has in choosing whether or not to exercise that right? Fifty-five percent of the 9-year-olds and 66% of the 13-year-olds felt that people who cannot read or write should be allowed to vote. Seventy-two percent of the 9-year-olds and 85% of the 13-year-olds knew that there are no laws in the United States that say adult men and women must vote.

Students are often more familiar with the

rights of a person accused of a crime than they are with their own constitutional rights and liberties. The high percentage of correct responses to the following items suggests that viewing crime shows on television has increased young Americans' knowledge in this area. Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were asked about the rights of an accused person when under arrest.

- Ninety-one percent of the 13-year-olds and 96% of the 17-year-olds knew that an accused person has the right to remain silent when police ask questions about the crime.

- Ninety-eight percent of the 13-year-olds and 99% of the 17-year-olds recognized that the accused has the right to know what he is accused of.

- Only 35% of the 13-year-olds and 56% of the 17-year-olds knew that an accused person does not have the right to see a member of his family before he is jailed.

- Nearly all of the students (98% of the 13-year-olds, 99% of the 17-year-olds) recognized that the accused has the right to have a lawyer represent him.

- Eighty-eight percent of the 13-year-olds and 92% of the 17-year-olds knew a person accused of stealing money does not have the right to go free if he returns the money.

With the exception of the question on the right to see one's family, the percentages of correct responses were quite high.

It is one thing to defend our own rights and liberties and another to support those of people who disagree with us. Are students willing to defend the rights and liberties of all kinds of people? The responses to the next two exercises provided no clear-cut answer, but they did suggest that the more unpopular views a person held, the less likely were young Americans to uphold that individual's constitutional rights.

Seventeen-year-olds were given descriptions of a number of activities and were asked to decide whether a person should or should not have the right to take the action described.

- Sixty-nine percent of the 17-year-olds felt that an off-duty soldier should have the right to demonstrate to protest our country's taking part in a war.

- Less than half (47%) the students felt that a man should have the right to write a letter to a newspaper saying that blacks should not be allowed to vote in his state.

- Only 40% of the 17-year-olds thought a woman should have the right to speak at a community meeting, urging that a law be passed that would restrict the number of children a family can have.

- Less than one-third (32%) of the 17-year-olds said that a man should have the right to campaign on television for candidates of the American Nazi Party.

It would appear that the unpopularity of the views espoused by these individuals affected the students' willingness to support their constitutional right to freedom of speech. Perhaps our country's recent experience with war in Southeast Asia made the soldier's protest more socially acceptable and explains why more students supported his right to speak.

Another item administered to all three age groups also revealed biases about the right of certain individuals to vote. In one case, respondents were given a picture and description of a 27-year-old man who is married and lives in the city where he works in a factory.

Ninety-three percent of the 9-year-olds, 98% of the 13-year-olds and 98% of the 17-year-olds thought he should have the right to vote.

In a second case, respondents were given a picture and description of a 25-year-old man

Look at the picture above. This 27-year-old man is married and lives in the city where he works in a factory. Should he have the right to vote?

Look at the picture above. This man is 25 years old. He is married and lives in the city. His wife works to earn money. He is unemployed. Should he have the right to vote?

---

who is married and lives in the city. His wife works to earn money. He is unemployed.

Seventy-five percent of the 9-year-olds, 80% of the 13-year-olds and 86% of the 17-year-olds said that the man should have the right to vote, notably fewer students than those who felt that the first man had the right to vote. The varying results on these questions indicate that students were not always willing to support equally the rights of all.

Several exercises were concerned with whether or not students would oppose unjust rules, laws and authority by lawful means. The responses indicated that the majority would, especially as the students got older. All three age groups were asked if laws could be changed. Seventy-two percent of the 9-year-olds, 91% of the 13-year-olds and 96% of the 17-year-olds answered affirmatively. When further asked if unfair laws should be changed, a high percentage of students at each age (78% of the 9-year-olds, 91% of the 13-year-olds and 95% of the 17-year-olds) responded "yes" as well.

When 9-year-olds were given this specific situation, "If there was a new rule in your classroom which you thought was very unfair, what would you do?" 53% offered an acceptable response. About three-fourths of these said that they would get in touch with those in authority on the school faculty — teachers, coaches or guidance counselors. "Tell the teacher and maybe she would change it," "Try to get some kids to tell the teacher that we don't like the rule" and "I could go to the teacher and try to prove my point" were among the answers. The next most popular response was to contact school administrators, usually the principal. "I'd sort of like

ask the principal to see if he'd change the rule," suggested one youth. Turning to parents for assistance and demanding the right to vote on the issue in question were the next most common responses.

Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were asked, "What could a person in your community try to do if there were a local law which he considered unjust?" Eighty percent of the 13-year-olds and 92% of the 17-year-olds gave at least one acceptable response, 63% and 78% gave at least two acceptable responses, but only 39% of the 13-year-olds and 48% of the 17-year-olds offered the *three* acceptable responses that the question tried to elicit.

The most frequently suggested solution was to contact someone in authority, usually an elected official. "Write his congressman and tell his feelings," answered a 13-year-old; "When I grow up — If they have a meeting I could go and tell them my opinion," proposed a 17-year-old. Circulating or signing petitions was the next most popular suggestion, followed by taking legal action, demonstrating, protesting and picketing, and talking to other people and discussing the situation with them. Less frequently offered reasons were using the mass media, using or threatening to use the election process, joining a group for concerted action or simply becoming better informed.

While one may be discouraged by the fact that the support of just law and the rights of all individuals is less than unanimous among all age groups, one can also be encouraged by the fact that the results on these exercises do indicate that support increases with age. Results show that a majority of students understood the need for law and recognized specific constitutional rights and liberties. Clearly, however, they were not so willing to defend the rights and liberties of others who espouse unpopular political opinions or other views that disagree with their own. On the other hand, a majority of students expressed their willingness to oppose by lawful means unjust rules, laws and authority.

CHAPTER 4

OBJECTIVE III: KNOW THE MAIN STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THEIR GOVERNMENTS

Citizenship Objective III, "Know the main structure and functions of their governments," was composed of the following subobjectives:

A. Recognize basic governmental purposes.

B. Understand the organization of federal and state governments.

C. Know the political structure of their local community.

D. Recognize the relationships of different levels of government.

E. Recognize the importance of political opposition and interest groups.

F. Recognize that democracy depends on the alertness and involvement of its citizens, and know how citizens can affect government.

About half the exercises were concentrated under Subobjective B. The remainder were distributed among the other subobjectives. There were no D and E exercises for age 9.

For Objective III, the performance at all ages was lower than the achievement levels reflected by the overall citizenship means. The most significant differences from overall patterns of performance were between males and females. Males performed higher than females at all ages. The largest margin between the sexes was at age 9 — 5 points' difference for 9-year-olds, 3 points for 13-year-olds and 3 points for 17-year-olds. (See Exhibits 10, 11 and 12.)

To examine their knowledge about government, students were asked questions about each branch of government. For example, on the executive branch, 17-year-olds were given the following statement, "We have a law that the President is the head of our armed forces instead of a military officer," and asked, "What is the reason for this law?" Thirty percent of the students offered an acceptable response. Some of these pointed out that the President is in a better position than the military to view the overall situation and would be more deliberate in his decision. "A military officer might not be aware of all the factors involved as would the president" and "The president is more informed about national affairs and situations than a military officer would be" were typical of these responses. Others noted that as an elected civilian, the President would be more representative of the people and his decisions more reflective of their will. Yet others expressed concern over the possibility of a dictatorship or military take-over if civil government is not separate from the military and superior to it. Additional acceptable responses noted that the President could react more quickly in an emergency and that, as chief executive, he could prevent rivalry among the military services and maintain unity.

Nearly all 17-year-olds were aware of when they could first vote in national elections. When asked, "According to the U.S. Constitution, what is the earliest age at which a person can vote in national elections?" 95% selected age 18.

They were not as knowledgeable about where they could find a statement of their civil rights. Three-fifths of the 13-year-olds

EXHIBIT 10. Mean Performance of 9-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective III
(Number of Items = 28)

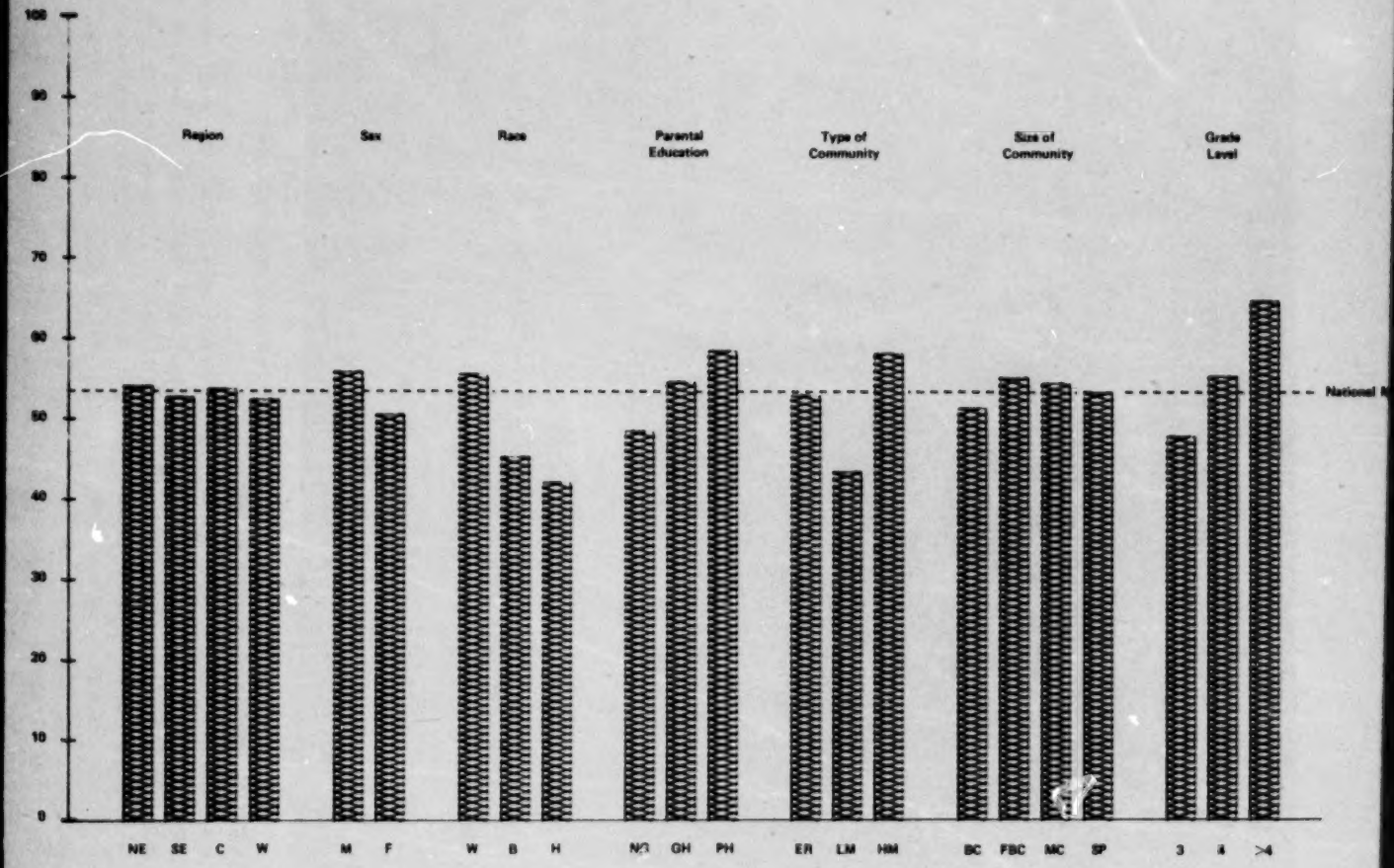


EXHIBIT 11. Mean Performance of 13-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective III
(Number of Items = 108)

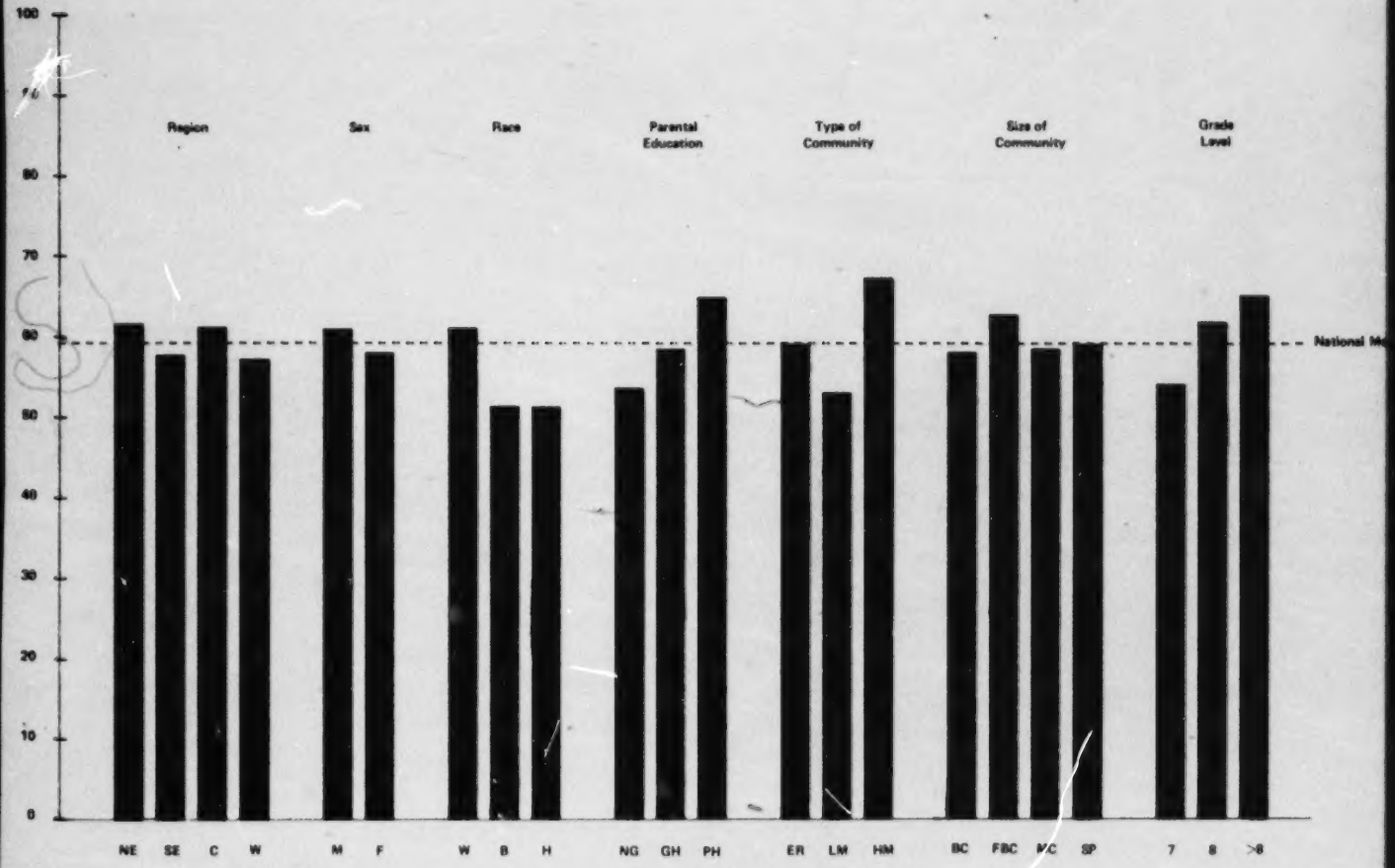
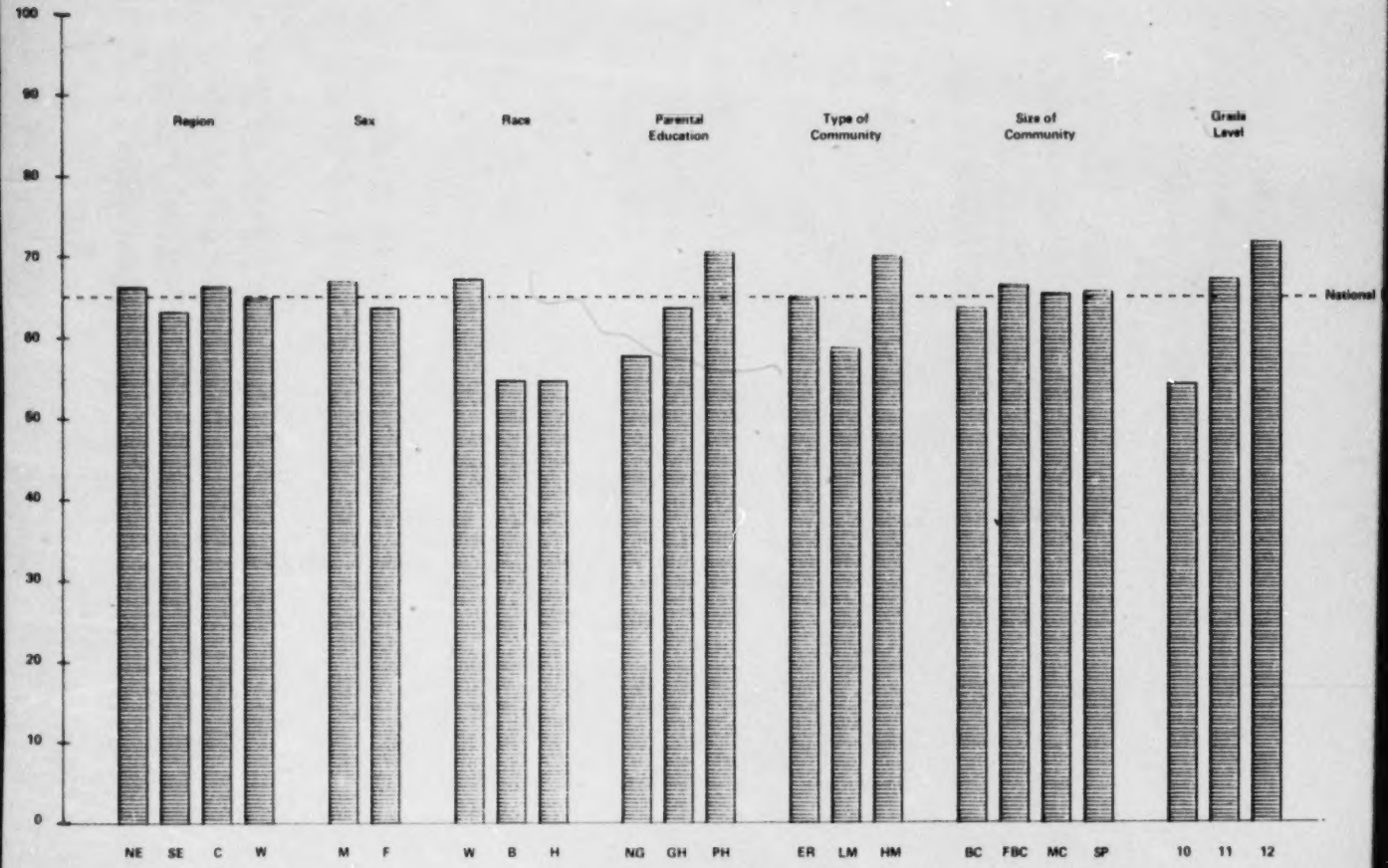


EXHIBIT 12. Mean Performance of 17-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective III (Number of Items = 121)



and four-fifths of the 17-year-olds recognized the Constitution as the document containing a statement of their civil rights.

In two related exercises, 9-year-olds were asked to identify the President of the United States. The first asked for his name; the second was illustrated by photographs of eight individuals, and the students were asked to show which one was President Ford. While 80% of the students knew the President's name when asked, 94% recognized his photograph. Perhaps the difference in performance levels on these two exercises can be attributed to the impact of television and newspapers, which frequently exposed these youngsters to the image of the President.

A large majority of students of all ages showed some understanding of the court system. Nine-year-olds were asked who in a court has the job of making sure that the trial is fair and run according to the rules. Seventy-five percent of the respondents correctly selected the judge; the jury (10%), the lawyer (9%) and the person on trial (3%) were chosen by others.

Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were asked the main duty of a jury in a criminal trial. Eighty-eight percent of the 13-year-olds and 94% of the 17-year-olds knew that the main duty of the jury is to determine the guilt or innocence of the defendant.

Based upon the responses of students on Objective III, it is clear that young Americans do not always recognize basic governmental purposes and do not fully understand the organization of federal and state governments. Just over half the 17-year-olds and considerably fewer 13-year-olds knew how many senators each state has in the U.S. Senate or how many congressmen each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. Thirty-one percent of the 13-year-olds and 52% of the 17-year-olds knew that each state has two senators; 32% of the 13-year-olds and 55% of the 17-year-olds recognized that the number of congressmen from each state varies with the population of the state.

Not all students in the older age groups fully understood the separation of powers and the responsibilities of each branch of government, either. Seventeen-year-olds responded to this multipart exercise:

> There are three branches of the federal government: the executive, the legislative, and the judicial. Each branch has different responsibilities. Fill in the oval beside the branch of government which has the major responsibility for each of the following functions.

For each question, all responses with their percentages are given. The correct response for each question is shown in italics.

	Executive Branch	Legislative Branch	Judicial Branch	I Don't Know
A. Writing and passing laws	14.1%	*68.5%*	7.9%	8.8%†
B. Directing the carrying out of laws	*34.3*	17.0	38.3	9.7
C. Judging if laws are unconstitutional	11.0	9.9	*68.4*	9.3
D. Vetoing bills	*60.0*	21.5	6.5	11.2
E. Approving presidential appointments to office	29.2	*44.2*	9.7	16.3

†Rows might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

"Suppose the President sends troops to another country to fight," 13- and 17-year-olds were told. "What action can the Congress take to stop United States' participation in the fighting?" Only a small percentage from each age group knew the right answer.

	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
● Refuse to provide money for further military action	15.5%	22.3%
○ Issue an order to the army to stop fighting	17.8	11.9
○ Declare the President's action unconstitutional	39.1	45.5
○ Remove several important military officers from duty	1.9	0.6
○ I don't know.	25.5†	19.1

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

Both age groups were also asked, "The United States Constitution gives which one of the following the power to approve treaties?"

	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
● The Senate	19.9%	34.6%
○ The Supreme Court	20.5	11.9
○ The Department of Defense	24.4	25.6
○ The Department of Justice	16.5	7.7
○ I don't know.	18.6†	19.9

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

While 17-year-olds performed better than 13-year-olds on the last two exercises, neither age group demonstrated much knowledge about these responsibilities of the separate branches of the federal government.

Besides the separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches, different levels of government also have their own responsibilities. All age groups appeared to understand the relationships among different levels of government better than the separation of powers among the three branches. Sixty-two percent of the 9-year-olds and 68% of the 13-year-olds knew that the federal, state and local governments can each make laws. Fifty-eight percent of the 9-year-olds and 80% of the 13-year-olds recognized that one of the functions of all three of these governments is to try to prevent crime. Almost half (48%) the 9-year-olds and nearly three-fourths (70%) of the 13-year-olds knew that not all three maintain a large army, navy and air force. Thirteen-year-olds performed considerably better than 9-year-olds on these items.

One-half the 13-year-olds and seven-tenths of the 17-year-olds knew that making laws about military services is not a function of local governments. Operating public elementary and high schools is, however, and 69% of the 13-year-olds and 71% of the 17-year-olds recognized the educational function of local governments.

To determine whether students recognize the importance of political opposition, 13- and 17-year-olds were asked if it would be better if we had only one political party in the United States. Over a third of the 13-year-olds and approximately one-fourth of the 17-year-olds either thought it would be better to have one political party or did not know.

On a question about whether it is legal to start a political party other than the Democratic and Republican parties, over half the 13-year-olds and approximately three out of ten 17-year-olds either thought it is against the law or did not know.

Another set of exercises was designed to determine whether students recognize that democracy depends on the alertness and involvement of its citizens and if they know

how citizens can affect government. To find out, 13- and 17-year-olds were given this statement and asked if they agreed or disagreed with it:

A lot of elections are NOT important enough to vote in.

	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
Agree	17.8%	10.7%
Disagree	61.9	70.8
Undecided	20.1†	18.5

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

Eighty-four percent of the 13-year-olds and 88% of the 17-year-olds felt that it is important to vote even when it appears that their candidate does not have a chance to win. About the same percentages of students (88% of the 13-year-olds and 85% of the 17-year-olds) thought that intelligence should not be a criterion for determining who should be allowed to vote.

A final exercise given to students at all three age groups asked what a democracy is. While less than 2% of the 9-year-olds knew what a democracy is, by age 17 almost three-fourths of the respondents knew.

The following table shows that performance on this item increased dramatically with age.

	9-Year-Olds	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
Acceptable	1.7%	42.1%	72.8%
Unacceptable	15.6	21.5	14.7
I don't know	77.9	29.0	8.6
No response	4.7†	7.3	3.9

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding.

Three-tenths of the 13-year-olds and over half the 17-year-olds gave definitions emphasizing the importance of the sovereignty of the people, majority rule and government by representation. "Where when people run the government — Over in Asia the king or ruler run the people," noted a 9-year-old. "A democracy gives freedom to the people, all people. The people can elect their own representatives," answered a 13-year-old. A 17-year-old student explained, "A democracy is when the people rule themselves by electing people to run the government." Other definitions made specific references to constitutional rights or general references to human equality, freedom and liberty, and the system of checks and balances.

From the exercises in Objective III, it is clear that older students had a better understanding than their younger contemporaries of the main structure and functions of their governments. Still, even among 17-year-olds, many students apparently did not know how the federal and state governments are organized, were confused by the system of checks and balances, and could not distinguish the responsibilities of the separate branches of government.

CHAPTER 5

OBJECTIVE IV: PARTICIPATE IN DEMOCRATIC CIVIC IMPROVEMENT

Are students willing to and do they participate in democratic civic improvement? This was the question raised in Objective IV and measured by the following subobjectives:

A. Believe that each person's civic behavior is important, and convey this belief to others.

B. Favor organized civic action where it is needed.

C. Actively work for civic improvement.

D. Participate in local, state and national governmental processes.

E. Apply democratic procedures effectively in small groups.

The responses to the exercises that measured Objective IV indicate that a majority of students participated in or were desirous of taking part in democratic civic improvement. Among 13- and 17-year-olds, however, the majority is a slim one. This might be explained in part by the fact that exercises administered to 9-year-olds dealt mainly with classroom and social situations, while 13- and 17-year-olds answered questions about their more direct involvement in civic and political participation. Although group achievement on Objective IV generally followed the overall patterns, females did perform better than males at each age, and the differences among white, black and Hispanic students were smaller. (See Exhibits 13, 14 and 15.)

The results indicate that the youngest students were most likely to believe that each person's civic behavior is important and to express the greatest willingness to become involved in school and civic affairs. However, this might be because the exercises asking about 9-year-olds' civic behavior and attitudes focused on classroom and social situations rather than on direct involvement in political processes. Although a large majority of the 9-year-olds (73%) said they would like to decide what will be done in class, only half (50%) thought they had any actual say about what happened in their classes.

Nine- and 13-year-olds were asked how important it is to obey the law about riding bicycles on one-way streets. While 91% of the 9-year-olds thought it "very important to obey the law," at age 13 only 68% felt the same way. Approximately one-fourth of the 13-year-olds thought it "somewhat important to obey the law."

All three ages were asked, "If you saw several students fighting in a school hallway, what would you do?" The answers and percentages of students that selected each follow:

	9-Year-Olds	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
Stay and watch the fight	7.7%	43.1%	43.5%
Try to stop the fight myself	17.2	5.6	8.0
Look for a teacher or principal to stop the fight	70.3	41.2	29.5
Leave as soon as possible and not report the fight	2.2	5.5	7.5
I don't know.	2.6	4.5†	11.2

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding.

EXHIBIT 13. Mean Performance of 9-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective IV
(Number of Items = 31)

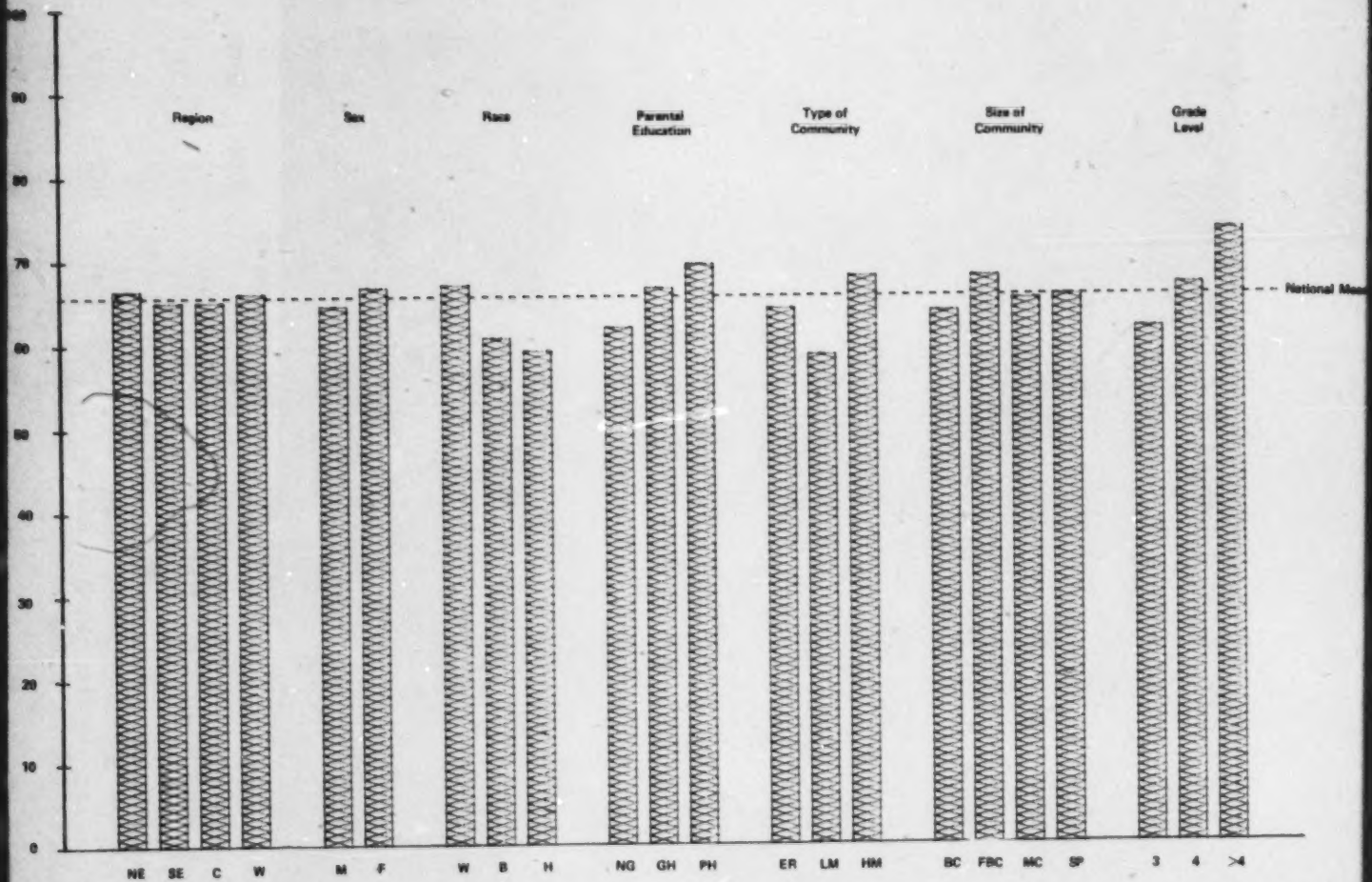
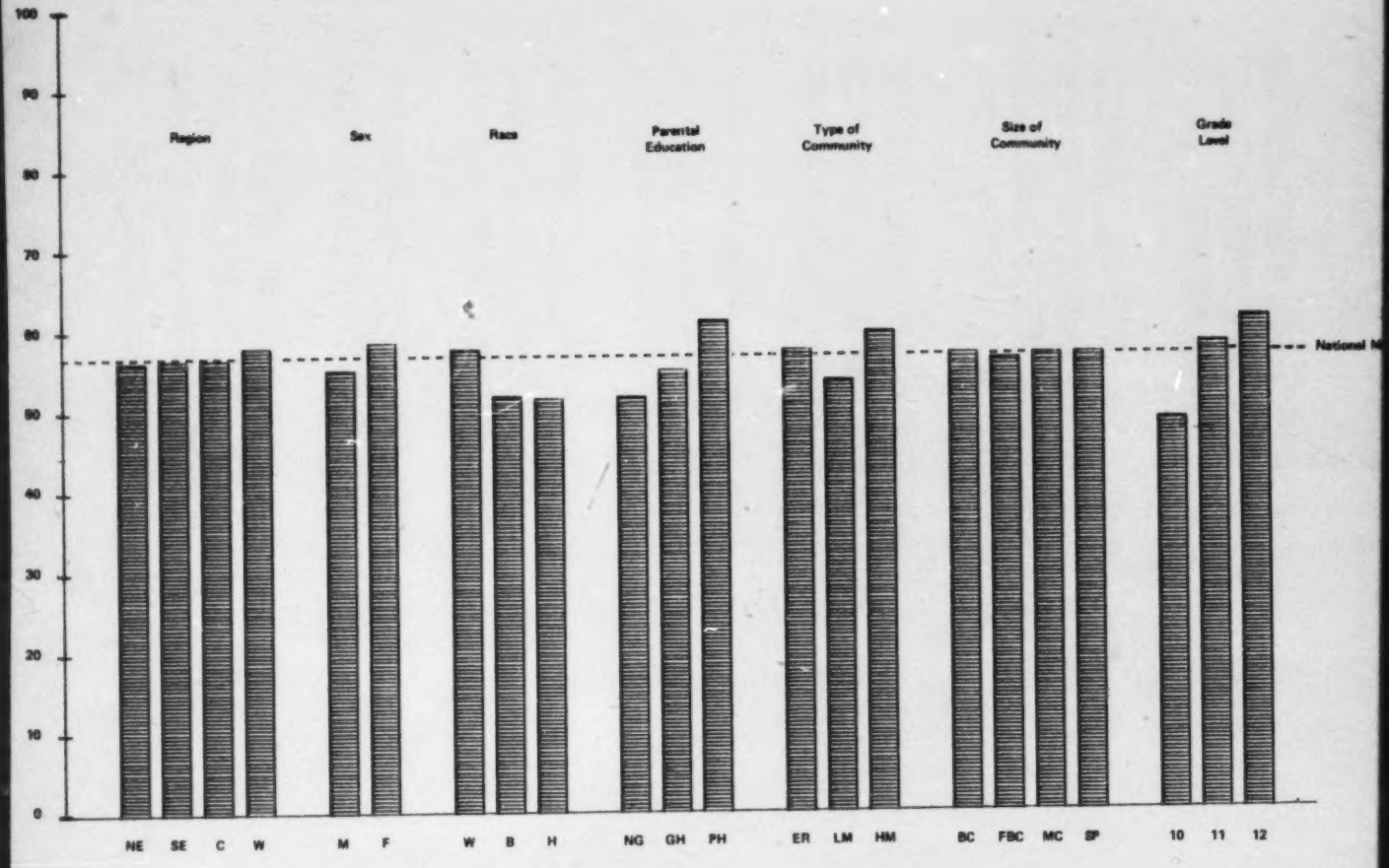


EXHIBIT 14. Mean Performance of 13-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective IV
(Number of Items = 30)

EXHIBIT 15. Mean Performance of 17-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective IV
(Number of Items = 36)



Again, the youngest students were most willing to get involved by either trying to stop the fight themselves or by looking for a teacher or principal to stop the fight.

When students from the two older age groups were asked, "Do you think you can have any influence on decisions of local government?" 44% of the 13-year-olds and 60% of the 17-year-olds answered "yes." Those who responded affirmatively were asked how they could influence decisions. Their answers reflected a wide range of alternatives. The most frequently mentioned method was to contact an elected official or someone else in authority. "Anyone can have influence if they care enough to contact their representatives and discuss their views with him" was the observation of one 17-year-old. "Participate in city council meetings," suggested another. The next most popular alternative was to use or threaten to use the election process. "You might be able to talk to others so they could vote on it and maybe it would influence vote for who you think will do the best job," explained a 13-year-old. A 17-year-old answered succinctly, "By voting for the candidate you believe in." Circulating and signing petitions, discussing the situation with others, demonstrating, protesting, picketing and making a joint effort with others were among proposed alternatives.

Students who answered in the negative (54% of the 13-year-olds and 43% of the 17-year-olds) were asked why they did not think they could influence decisions of local government. Many indicated some feeling of futility in making any attempt by themselves. "Cus I'm only one kid and usually it takes more than one person to have them change something," explained a 13-year-old. "They wouldn't listen to you" was the answer of a 17-year-old. The next most common response mentioned that the student was too young to vote. Another fairly common answer pointed out that no one listens to young people or pays attention to teenagers' views anyway. "They don't take influences from kids," "Because we're just kids they wouldn't listen to us" and "Because to grown-ups we're just dumb little kids that don't know anything" expressed the views of these 13-year-olds. A small percentage of students expressed doubts that anyone could do anything. "Just becus you think something should be done, doesn't mean they ever do anything about it" summarized the feelings of this group.

Measured by the next two self-report items, black students expressed more interest in politics than white youths and were more active in working for changes in their schools.

Additionally, 76% of the 13-year-olds and

		13-Year-Olds			17-Year-Olds		
		National	White	Black	National	White	Black
A.	I am interested in learning about government.						
	True about me	45.2%	44.6%	56.2%	56.5%	56.2%	63.5%
	NOT true about me	43.0	43.6	38.4	31.8	32.5	25.5
	I don't know.	11.6†	11.7	5.1	11.7	11.3	11.0
B.	I like to watch TV programs about elections and politics.						
	True about me	17.0	15.2	27.4	24.7	23.6	29.9
	NOT true about me	79.5	81.4	71.0	69.9	71.1	67.5
	I don't know.	3.5	3.4	1.5	5.1	5.0	2.6

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

70% of the 17-year-olds said they liked to guess who was going to win in elections.

A second item asked, "Have you ever worked individually or with other students to try to bring about changes like these in your school?" The following table shows percentages for the "yes" response:

13-Year-Olds			17-Year-Olds		
National	White	Black	National	White	Black
Change in School Rules					
50.3%	48.6%	62.0%	55.1%	55.1%	58.4%
Improvements in the Buildings or Grounds					
49.8	47.1	65.8	46.9	44.9	57.1
Changes in Courses Offered					
43.5	41.8	55.7	49.4	46.7	63.3
Increase in Extracurricular Activities					
49.4	48.9	57.2	51.2	49.6	61.4
Changes in Ways Decisions Are Made					
53.2	51.0	72.1	46.7	44.6	61.9

The performance levels for 13- and 17-year-olds were about the same on this item. Black students performed better than whites and the nation as a whole on every part of the exercise.

While many students said they had been involved in school activities, only 9% said they had ever helped in a public election campaign. Of these, most said they had canvassed door to door, telephoned or otherwise talked to people, worked at campaign headquarters, stuffed envelopes, answered the phone, typed or performed similar tasks.

Both 13- and 17-year-olds answered the following question:

> Suppose our government officials in Washington passed a law which you believed to be unjust. Would you try to do something to get the law changed?

Their choices and the percentages of students selecting each are given in the following table:

	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
No, I wouldn't want to.	7.5%	4.5%
No, because I don't know what I could do.	18.5	13.7
Yes, but I don't know what I could do.	36.1	41.3
Yes, I would try to do something such as _____.	37.8†	40.3

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

Only slightly more 17-year-olds than 13-year-olds gave an affirmative answer and were able to offer an acceptable suggestion on what they might do to get the law changed. These figures might give cause for alarm when one realizes that 17-year-olds will soon be voting. Of those students who responded "yes" and gave an acceptable answer, just over half in each age group said that they would contact elected officials, either in Washington, D.C., or locally. Circulating or signing petitions was the next most popular suggestion, followed by demonstrating or simply discussing the situation with other people. Other suggestions included taking legal action, using the mass media, relying upon the election process to redress the grievance, joining with others and becoming more informed oneself.

Nine-year-olds were asked a series of questions designed to see if they applied democratic procedures effectively in small groups and believed that each person's participatory behavior is important.

- Seventy-eight percent said that they were sometimes willing to be a leader in a game.
- Sixty-three percent said that instead of the teacher deciding, they liked the class

to vote on what games to play at recess.

- Eighty-two percent said that when they played with friends, they liked to help decide what they were going to play.
- Fifty-six percent said they did not always stick up for the friend they liked best when their friends were arguing.
- Sixty-two percent said that when their class voted to do a project they were not interested in, they helped complete the project anyway.

The results indicate that a majority of the 9-year-olds did apply democratic procedures and believed that each person in the group's participatory behavior is important.

Based on the responses to the items in Objective IV, apparently a majority of students participated in or were desirous of taking part in democratic civic improvement. Among 13- and 17-year-olds, however, the majority was a fairly slim one. The fact that 17-year-olds are so near the voting age and did not show a greater interest in and a stronger desire to participate in democratic civic improvement, however, will concern those who feel that the groundwork for good citizenship among adults must be laid among young people.

CHAPTER 6

OBJECTIVE V: UNDERSTAND IMPORTANT WORLD, NATIONAL AND LOCAL CIVIC PROBLEMS

Five subobjectives composed the fifth citizenship objective, "Understand important world, national and local civic problems."

A. Understand social conflict among individuals, groups and nations and the difficulties in achieving peace and social harmony.

B. Recognize how different civic policies may affect people's efforts to meet their economic needs.

C. Recognize major environmental problems and are aware of alternative civic solutions.

D. See relations among civic problems and particular events.

E. Generate good ideas about causes and solutions for civic problems.

Over three-fourths of the exercises addressed themselves to Subobjective A. With few minor exceptions, patterns of group performance for Objective V were the same as overall citizenship performance patterns. Males performed better than females at age 9 (4 points' difference), but there were no significant differences at ages 13 and 17. (See Exhibits 16, 17 and 18.)

From their answers to the exercises in Objective V, it is apparent that a majority of students at all three ages understood some of the social conflict that exists among individuals, groups and nations and the difficulties they have in achieving peace and social harmony. When asked, "If somebody says something about 'world peace', what do you think he means by 'world peace'?" 34% of the 9-year-olds gave an acceptable answer. Most who gave acceptable responses cited such answers as "He wants our world to have no more fighting" and "He hopes all the countries of the world never get into wars." Thirty percent of the students said they did not know the answer, 28% gave unacceptable responses and 8% did not respond. After the assessment administrator clarified that "world peace means that there are no wars in the world and countries aren't fighting," the 9-year-olds were then asked, "Do we have peace everywhere in the world now?" Nineteen percent of the students answered "yes," 80% answered "no" and 2% replied "I don't know." About a fifth of those who answered "no" gave acceptable responses to the third part of the exercise, "Will you explain what you mean?" Very few could offer examples of countries that were fighting or cite other specific disturbances to world peace, however.

Students were also examined on the purpose and functions of the United Nations. Sixty percent of the 13-year-olds and 68% of the 17-year-olds knew that the United Nations is the organization established after the second World War for the maintenance of world peace. Fifteen percent of the 17-year-olds mistakenly identified the League of Nations.

Thirteen- and 17-year-old students also answered the question, "What is the main purpose of the United Nations?" Again, the 17-year-olds were more knowledgeable.

EXHIBIT 16. Mean Performance of 9-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective V
(Number of Items = 12)

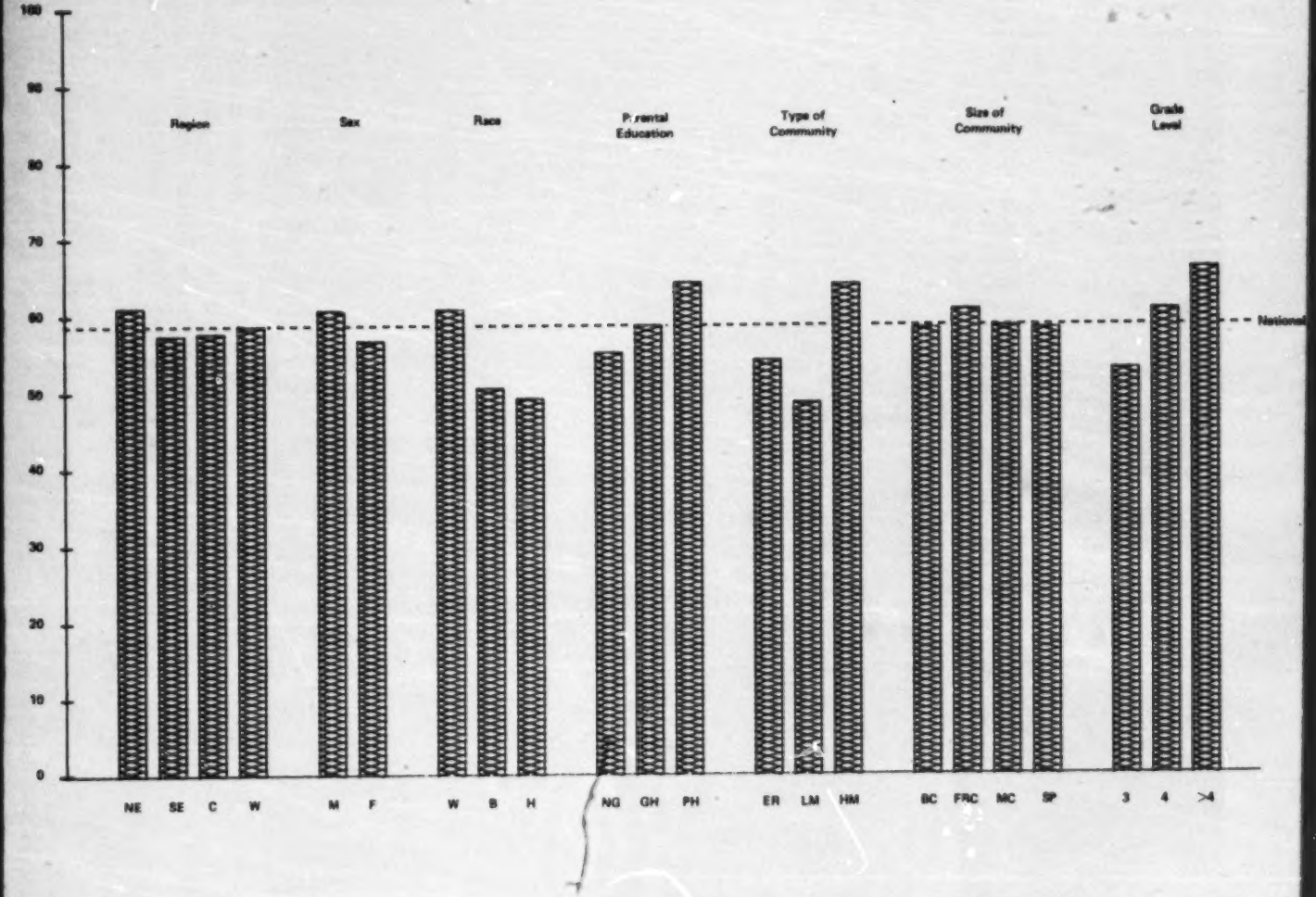


EXHIBIT 17. Mean Performance of 13-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective V
(Number of Items = 20)

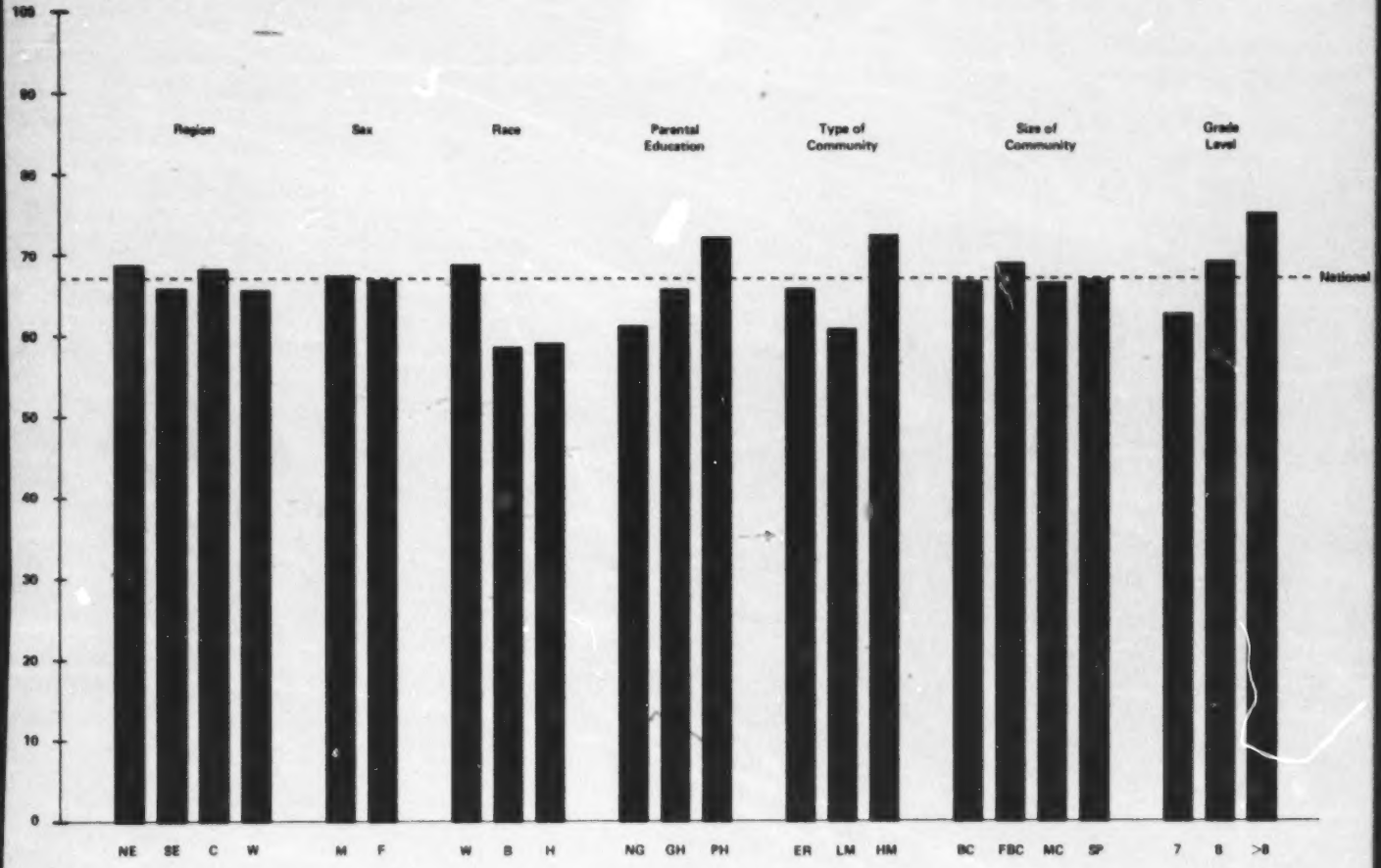
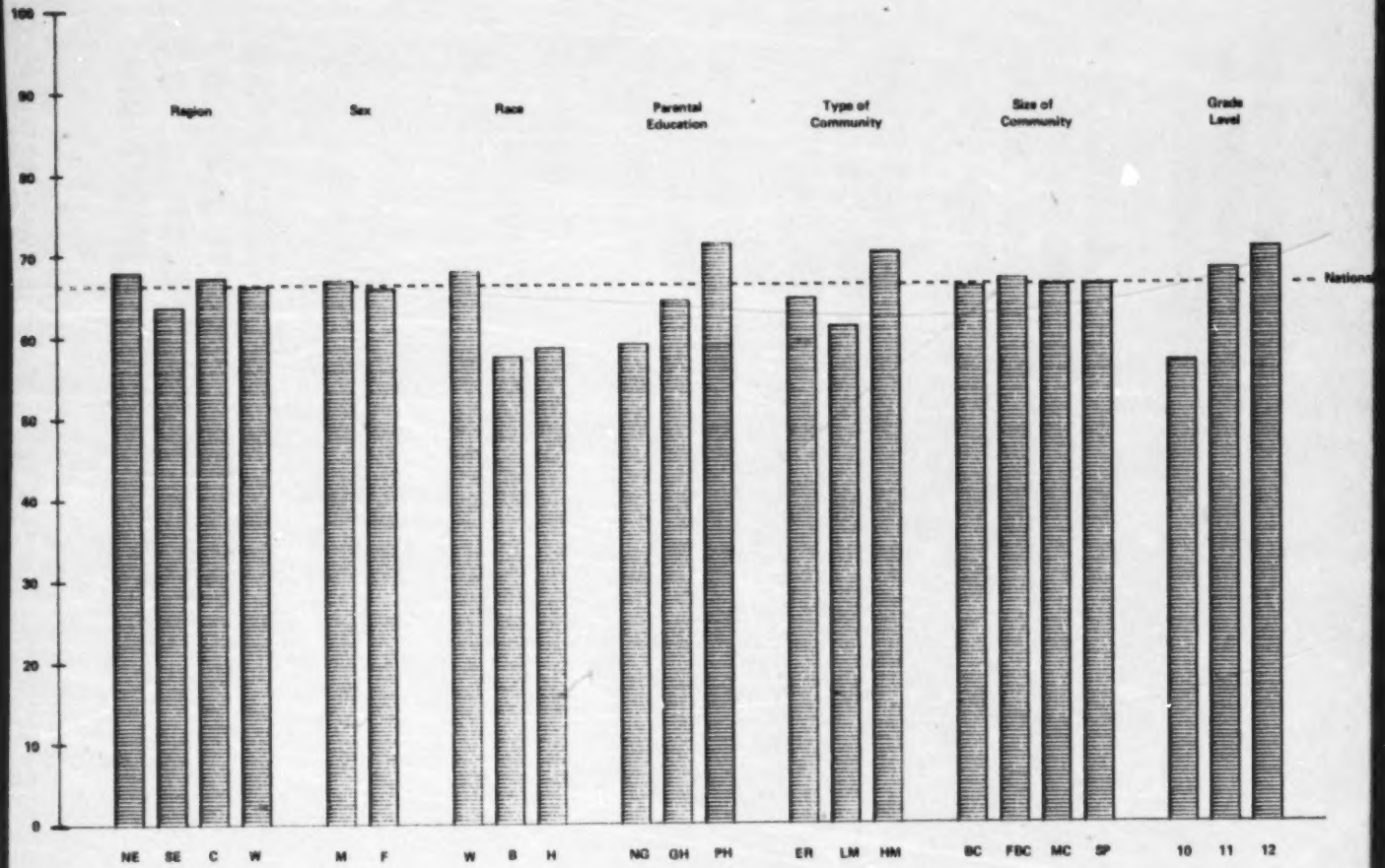


EXHIBIT 18. Mean Performance of 17-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective V
(Number of Items = 22)



	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
○ To enforce international laws	8.4%	5.1%
○ To spread democracy throughout the world	6.7	3.4
○ To organize student exchanges between countries	3.7	1.0
● To help nations settle their differences peacefully	62.0	82.5
○ To have a world government take the place of national government	4.7	3.3
○ I don't know.	14.3†	4.3

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

Clearly the "Cold War" does not mean as much to 17-year-olds as it did to their parents' generation. Students were asked, "The term 'Cold War' has been most commonly used to describe which one of the following?"

○ Communist China's invasion and conquest of Tibet	1.7%
○ Hitler's invasion of Russia in the winter of 1941–1942	15.4
● Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States after 1945	43.8
○ The conflict between the United States and Communist China in Korea	16.0
○ I don't know.	22.9†

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

Fifty-one percent of the males answered the question correctly, compared with 37% of the females.

Another exercise related to post-World War II developments revealed 17-year-olds to be more knowledgeable than 13-year-olds. Still, only about a third of the older students knew the correct answer to the following question:

The European Common Market was formed for which one of the following purposes?

	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds
○ To unite the former colonies of Great Britain	3.3%	3.5%
○ To strengthen the economies of underdeveloped countries	20.8	22.5
○ To keep peace in Europe by establishing a common armed force	9.3	5.9
● To establish a pattern for the freer flow of resources among its membership	18.5	36.8
○ I don't know.	48.0†	31.0

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

The next exercise was administered to 9- and 13-year-olds:

> Two groups of people live on an island. They have different religions, eat different foods, and speak different languages. There is fear and hatred between the two groups.

"What is the BEST solution to this problem?" students were asked.

	9-Year-Olds	13-Year-Olds
Make one group leave the island	2.6%	1.1%
Divide the island and make each group live in its own part of the island	22.1	13.5
Fight it out until one of the groups is killed off	2.7	2.5
Choose people from both groups to write laws that will protect everyone's rights	53.8	75.9
Let the group that is biggest decide everything for all of them	5.4	1.9
I don't know.	13.3†	4.8

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding.

While only about half the 9-year-olds chose the most acceptable answer ("Choose people from both groups . . . "), three-fourths of the 13-year-olds did.

A final exercise asked 17-year-olds to "Give ONE reason why it has been difficult for new African nations to achieve national unity." Forty-one percent of the students offered acceptable responses. The reason most frequently cited was tribalism or cultural and language differences. "Because in each African nation there are so many different languages, communication becomes difficult because of the tribes and people of that nation" and "Because the tribes all have their own leaders, beliefs and languages and breaking through those barriers is quite difficult" were two explanations. Political instability was also mentioned frequently as a contributing factor. Lack of education was the next most popular response, followed by economic problems — a lack of technology and poor communications and transportation systems, the threat of foreign interventions and the vestiges of colonialism, physical isolation and geographical barriers, and racial problems. While less than half of the students gave acceptable responses to this exercise, the wide variety of answers demonstrated a collective awareness among many 17-year-olds of the difficulties new African nations have faced in striving for national unity.

Students displayed a fair awareness and understanding of important world problems based on the exercises in Objective V. In most instances where particular items were administered to both 13- and 17-year-olds, the older students were more knowledgeable.

CHAPTER 7

OBJECTIVE VI: APPROACH CIVIC DECISIONS RATIONALLY

Performance on the final citizenship objective, "Approach civic decisions rationally," was measured by items designed to address the following subobjectives:

A. Seek relevant information and alternative viewpoints on civicly important decisions.

B. Evaluate civic communications and actions carefully as a basis for forming and changing their own views.

C. Plan and organize civic tasks effectively.

D. Support open, honest communication and universal education.

There were only minor deviations in group achievement from the usual patterns of performance. What is noteworthy in the group patterns of performance for this objective is how few significant differences exist at age 9 and how many appear in the later age groups. There were no significant regional differences at age 9, but 13-year-old students from the Northeast were 3 points above and 17-year-olds from the Southeast were 3 points below their respective national means on this objective. The differences between males and females were not significant at age 9, but females outperformed males at ages 13 and 17. White students performed better than black and Hispanic students at all ages. At ages 13 and 17, Hispanic students outperformed black students. (See Exhibits 19, 20 and 21.)

From the results on the following exercise, one can see that a large majority of 9-year-olds tried to understand opposing viewpoints on social controversies of interest to them.

> Some of your playmates are talking about the new rules for your school's playground. You have not heard about the rules before. Some like the rules and some do not like the rules. What would you do about this disagreement?

Join the side with the most people	2.2%
Help the side with your best friend	7.1
Don't say anything	9.9
Listen and try to understand the rules and feelings	71.1
I don't know.	9.5†

†Columns might not total 100% because of rounding and/or nonresponse.

Are older students interested in civic affairs? Are they informed about social problems and current events, and do they understand the need to have access to opposing points of view? A number of exercises were designed to provide answers to these questions. Two related exercises indicated that students' interest in national politics and world affairs increased slightly between ages 13 and 17. Both ages were asked to respond to the following item:

> Some people think it is important to discuss what is going on in government and politics much of the time. Other people prefer not to talk about such things. In parts A through C below, indicate how often you talk with others about what is going on in our country in government and politics.

EXHIBIT 19. Mean Performance of 9-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective VI
(Number of Items = 7)

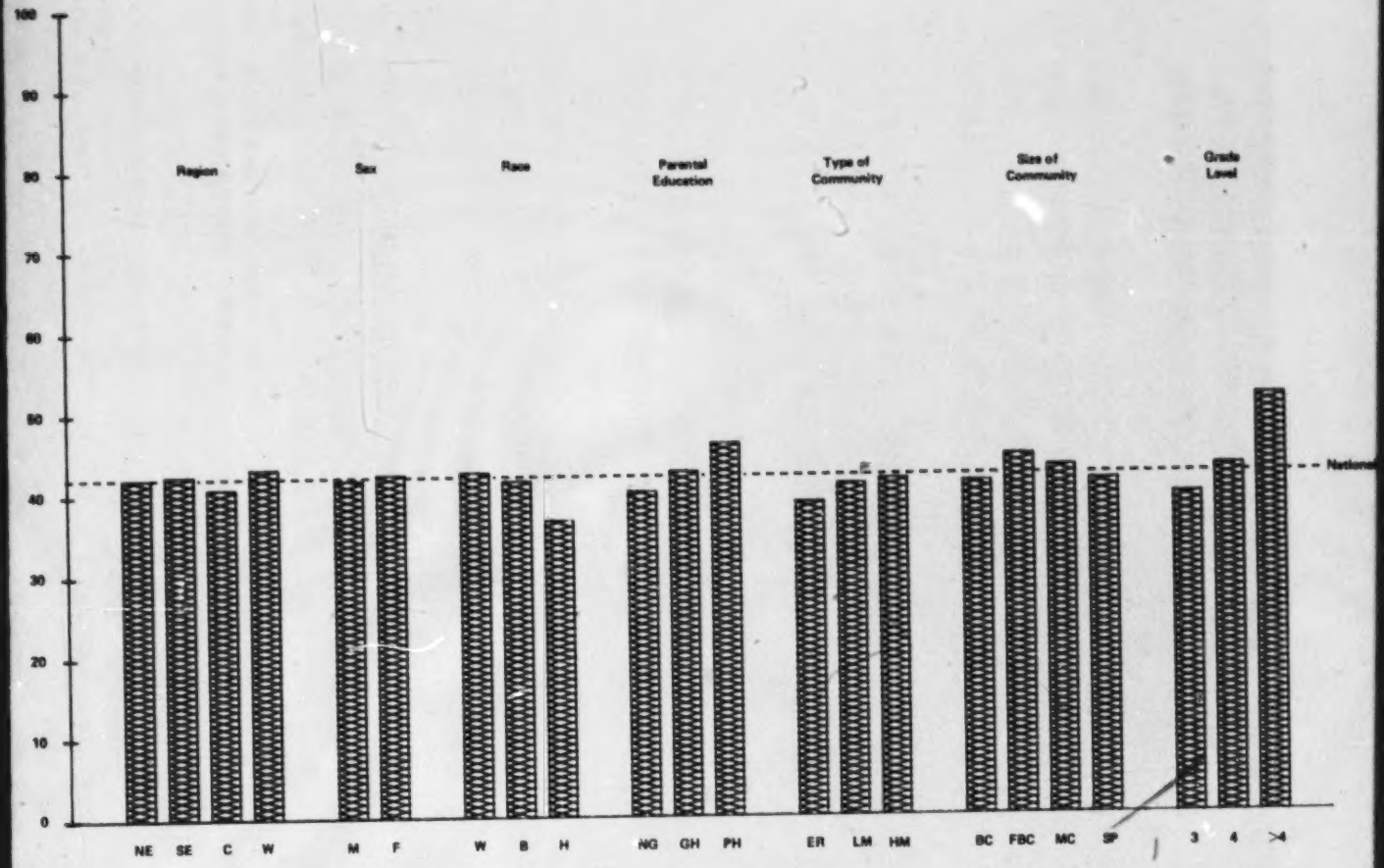


EXHIBIT 20. Mean Performance of 13-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective VI
(Number of Items = 14)

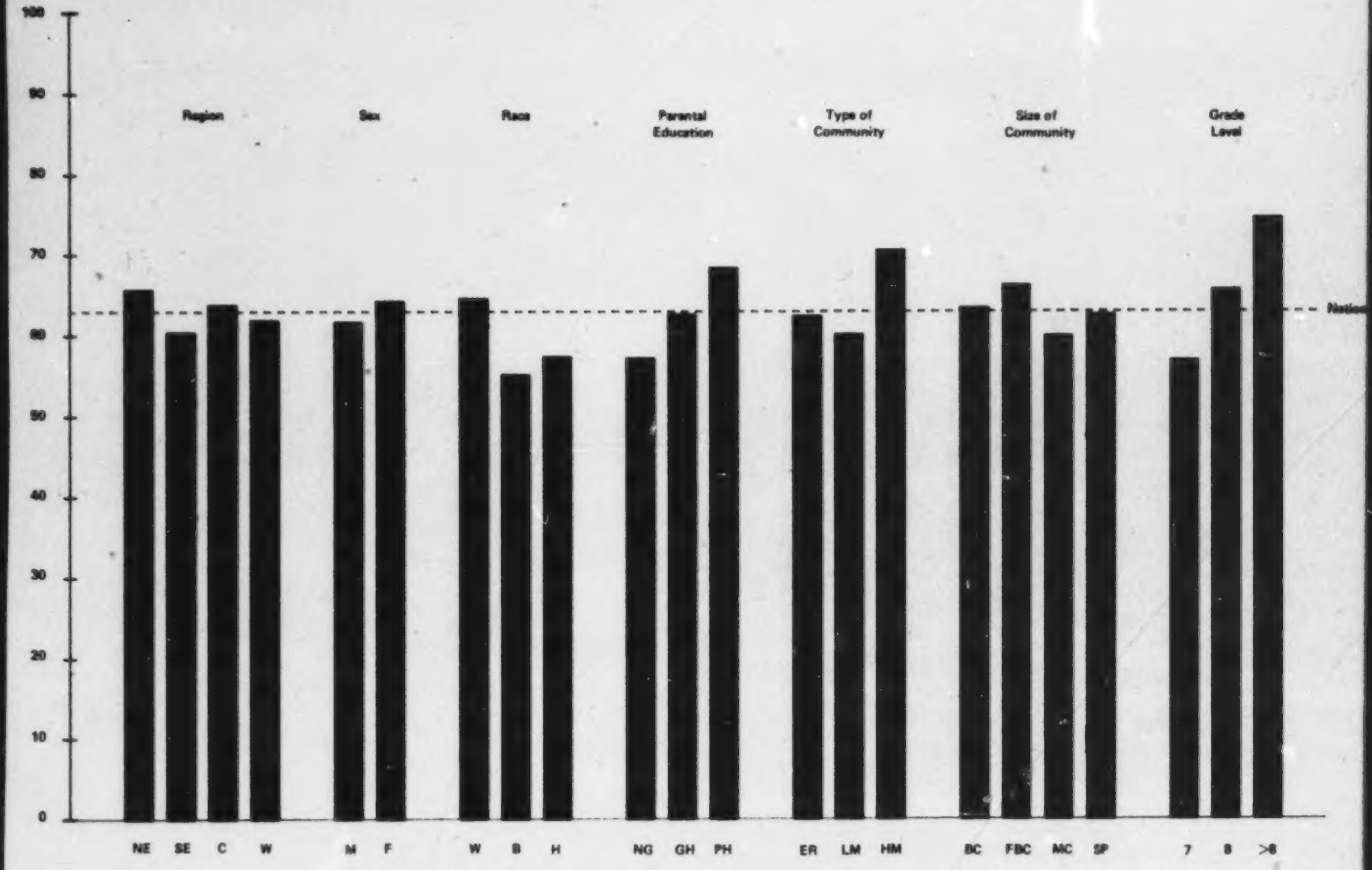
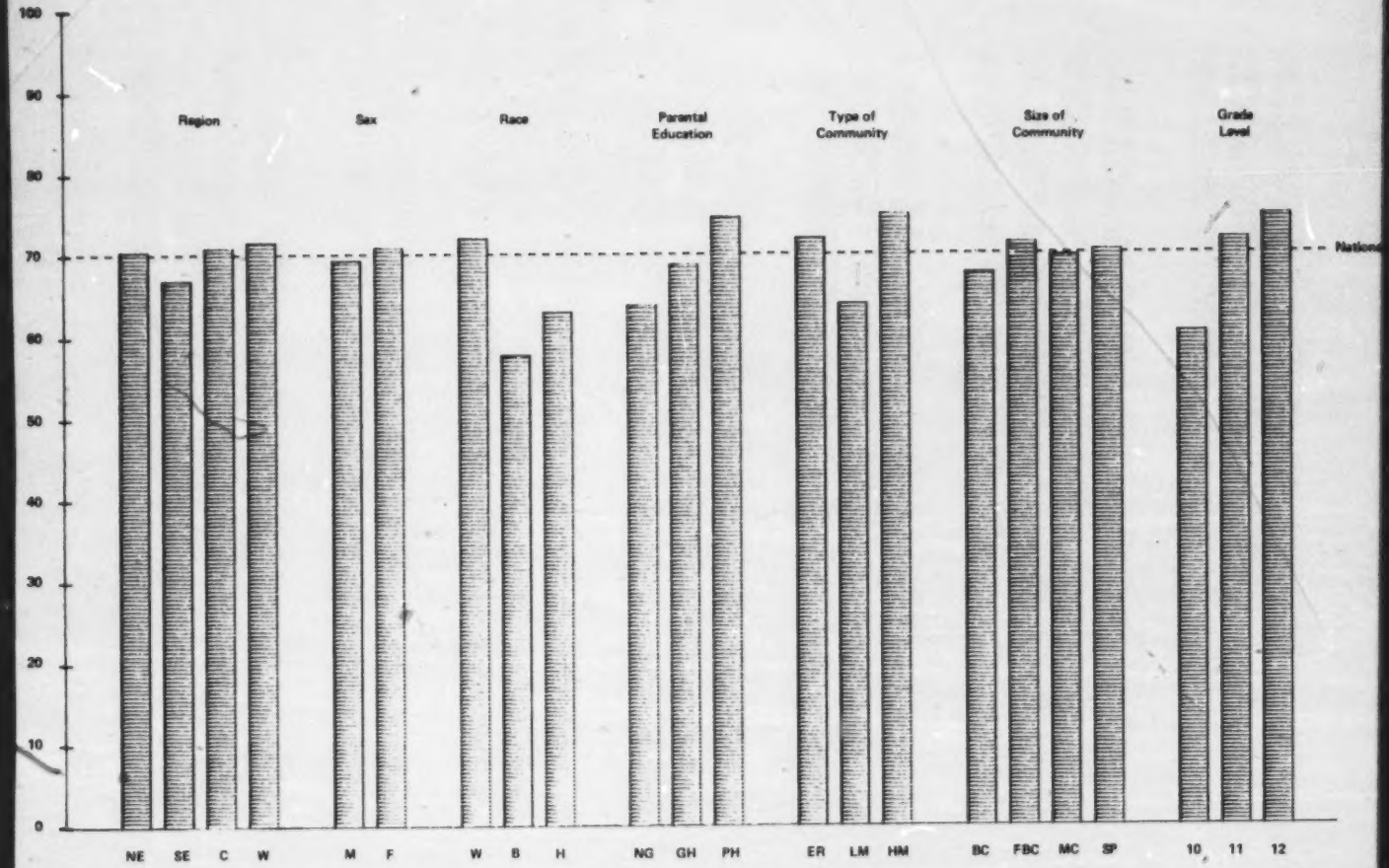


EXHIBIT 21. Mean Performance of 17-Year-Olds on Citizenship Items in Objective VI
(Number of Items = 16)



	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
A. With your friends?				
Several times a week	12.3%	41.2%	13.6%	51.7%
About once a week or less often	28.9		38.1	
Almost never	58.7		48.2	
B. With your parents?				
Several times a week	24.5	67.4	24.6	71.0
About once a week or less often	42.9		46.4	
Almost never	32.4		28.9	
C. With your teachers in class?				
Several times a week	37.0	73.1	45.4	81.1
About once a week or less often	36.1		35.7	
Almost never	26.8		18.7	

The next exercise asked:

Some people feel that it is important to know what is happening in other countries. Other people are more interested in their own country. In parts A through C below, indicate how often you talk with others about what other countries are doing.

	13-Year-Olds		17-Year-Olds	
A. With your friends?				
Several times a week	8.8%	38.8%	10.1%	45.9%
About once a week or less often	30.0		35.8	
Almost never	61.1		54.0	
B. With your parents?				
Several times a week	17.9	60.7	17.5	61.6
About once a week or less often	42.8		44.1	
Almost never	39.1		38.3	
C. With your teachers in class?				
Several times a week	37.9	78.0	38.5	79.3
About once a week or less often	40.1		40.8	
Almost never	21.9		20.5	

In their answers to both of these exercises, 13- and 17-year-olds indicated that they discussed these matters most frequently at school with their teachers, secondly with their parents and less frequently with their friends.

Although nearly every 13- and 17-year-old had access to television, radio and newspapers, only a minority utilized the media to learn about the news. Ninety-eight percent of the 13-year-olds and 99% of the 17-year-olds had televisions at home. When asked, "Did you watch the news on TV yesterday?" 26% of the 13-year-olds and 34% of the 17-year-

olds replied "yes." Those who gave an affirmative answer were asked, "What do you remember from the news program?" The four most frequently mentioned types of news items were criminal activities without political motives; national or local politics; accidents, fires, emergencies or natural disasters; and weather forecasts and sports news. Ninety-eight percent of the 13-year-olds and 99% of the 17-year-olds had radios at home. When asked, "Did you hear the news on the radio yesterday?" 20% of the 13-year-olds and 34% of the 17-year-olds answered "yes." "What do you remember from the news program?" they were asked. Again, the most frequently given types of answers were in the same four categories listed above. Twenty-six percent of the 13-year-olds and 32% of the 17-year-olds said they had read the news in the newspaper the day before. The news items they remembered most commonly were in the same categories as those remembered from television and radio. Seventeen-year-olds were more likely than 13-year-olds to use all three forms of media to gain information about the news. It is interesting that students did not rely greatly upon any one of the three forms of media over the other two in gathering the news.

All three age groups responded to the question: "Why might it be good to have the newspapers in a city written and published by more than one company?" Thirty-one percent of the 9-year-olds, 66% of the 13-year-olds and 85% of the 17-year-olds gave acceptable responses. About two-thirds of the 17-year-olds and two-fifths of the 13-year-olds made reference to the fact that there are different viewpoints on the same news story. Less than a tenth of the 9-year-olds with an acceptable answer cited this reason. The most popular response among 9-year-olds (nearly half the students who gave acceptable responses) mentioned that if there were more than one newspaper, there would be a wider range of news items or broader news coverage. "Just one company might write about some things but another company might write about other things," explained one youngster. This was the second most common response among 13- and 17-year-olds. Other reasons cited were that there would be different news in papers published by more than one company or there would be greater competition among the newspapers and a wider choice for the reader; the public would not be without a newspaper if one of the companies failed or was threatened by a strike; and different newspapers have different literary styles or purposes and serve different audiences.

Thirteen- and 17-year-olds were given the following item to determine whether they evaluate civic communications and actions carefully as a basis for forming and changing their own views:

> Read the following statements made by four speakers. You will be asked to tell which speaker bases his opinion on facts rather than on his personal feelings.
>
> Speaker I: I think Hunter lost the election because members of his own political party failed to support him. I heard from Walters that the Crash Party decided at a secret meeting not to work for Hunter but to support his opponent, Pallor.
>
> Speaker II: I don't think so. Hunter's campaign manager told me that Pallor's workers were buying votes. They were offering the people two dollars each if they would vote for Pallor. That's why Hunter lost.
>
> Speaker III: I disagree with both of you. According to a poll taken after the election, 84 percent of the people questioned said they voted for Pallor because he promised to lower taxes. Hunter lost the election largely because of this issue.
>
> Speaker IV: It is perfectly obvious that Hunter lost because of his religion. I've heard people all over town whispering that they would never vote for a member of that religion.
>
> Which speaker bases his opinion more on facts than on his personal feelings?

The responses showed that a large majority of students from both ages recognized the correct answer. Seventeen-year-olds were even more discerning than 13-year-olds. Seventy-six percent of the 13-year-olds and 89% of the 17-year-olds recognized that Speaker III based his opinion on facts rather than on personal feelings.

A final exercise asked 17-year-olds, "Have you ever written a letter to a government official or representative?" Only 16% said that they had. "What was the letter about?" Over four-fifths of those who had written requested personal favors. "Congressional nomination for Annapolis Naval ACADEMY" and "I asked to be appointed to West Point" were typical requests. A small number of students wrote in support of or against a political issue or governmental official. A few wrote simply asking for information on national or international matters.

Students' answers to the exercises in Objective VI indicate that young Americans increasingly approach civic decisions rationally as they mature. While they are not particularly intent on keeping abreast of local, national and international affairs, they seem to become more discerning about how to gain relevant information and evaluate alternative viewpoints as they grow older.

CHAPTER 8

AGE GROUP COMPARISONS

Did performance levels improve with age? Certainly they did between ages 13 and 17 — when students either prepare to enter high school or are about to graduate. A comparison of the citizenship means of 13- and 17-year-olds on all exercises (see the chart below) shows that 17-year-old students scored higher than 13-year-olds. (See also Exhibit 22.) This is true for each of the six objectives. The greatest increase was for Objective III, "Know the main structure and functions of their governments." The exercises in that chapter measured knowledge rather than attitudes or behavior. The noticeably larger difference between 13- and 17-year-olds' performance on this objective suggests that the relationship between schooling and achievement on knowledge items might be particularly noteworthy. The smallest gain between ages 13 and 17 was for Objective IV, "Participate in democratic civic improvement."

Comparisons between the performance levels of older students and 9-year-olds cannot be made because the latter group was examined on few of the exercises that were administered to the older students.

Other comparisons based upon the overall citizenship means on the overlap exercises lead to less encouraging conclusions:

- Seventeen-year-old blacks performed at the same level as 13-year-old whites.
- Thirteen-year-olds from the affluent urban and suburban communities outperformed disadvantaged 17-year-olds from the impoverished inner cities.
- Thirteen-year-olds whose parents had some education beyond high school did better on the citizenship objectives than 17-year-olds whose parents had not graduated from high school.

Further, the rates of gains for groups remained relatively identical between the ages of 13 and 17. There was approximately a

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Age Group Means on Overlap Exercises

Objective	Number of Exercises	13-Year-Olds	17-Year-Olds	Percentage Points of Difference
I	25	75.9%	82.2%	6.3%
II	64	66.6	75.9	9.3
III	87	58.3	71.0	12.7
IV	23	53.9	58.9	5.0
V	15	63.2	69.5	6.3
VI	11	60.1	70.4	10.3
All exercises	192	62.0	71.9	9.9

EXHIBIT 22. Performance Means on All Citizenship Overlap Items, Ages 13 and 17
(Number of Items = 192)

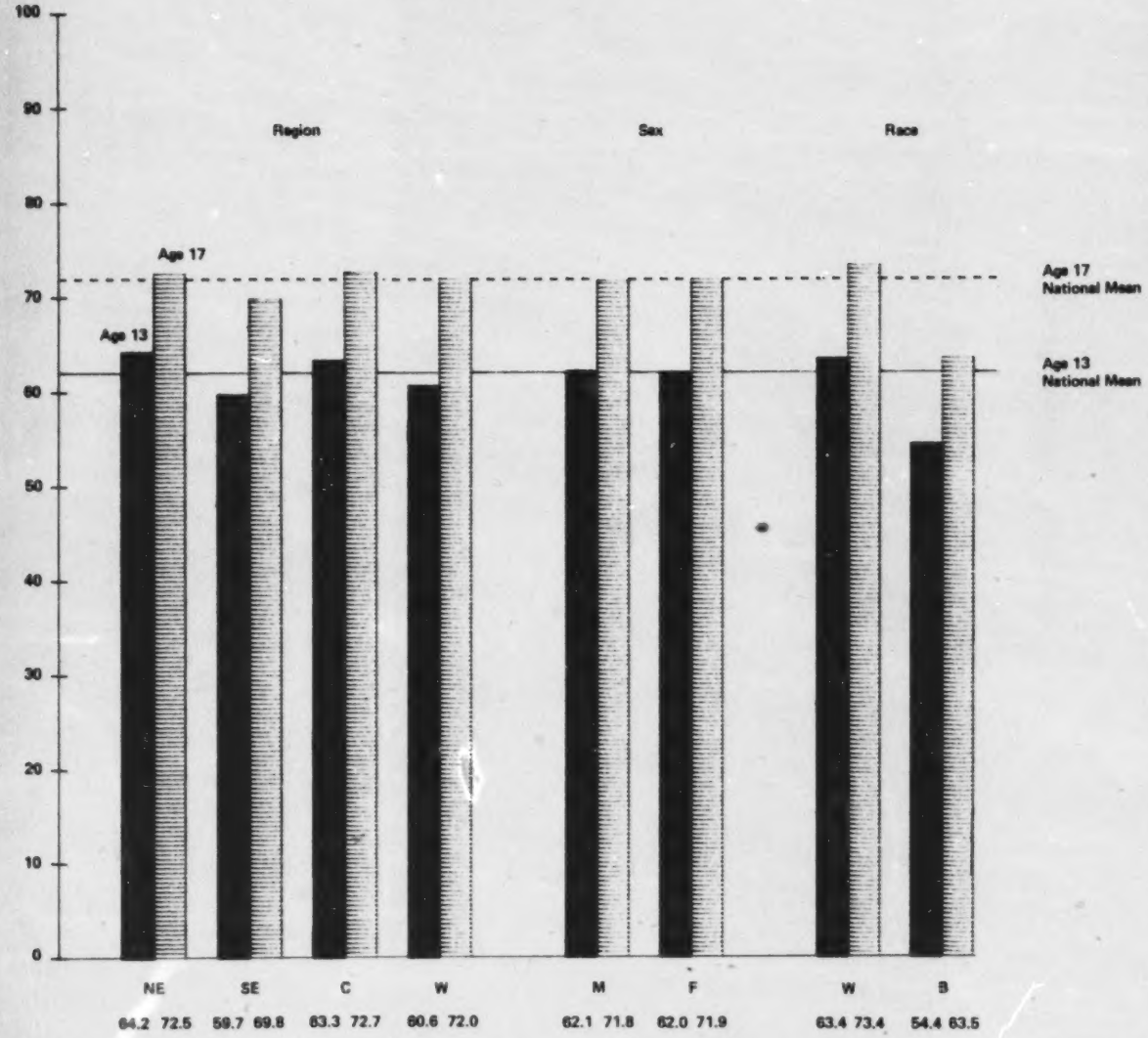
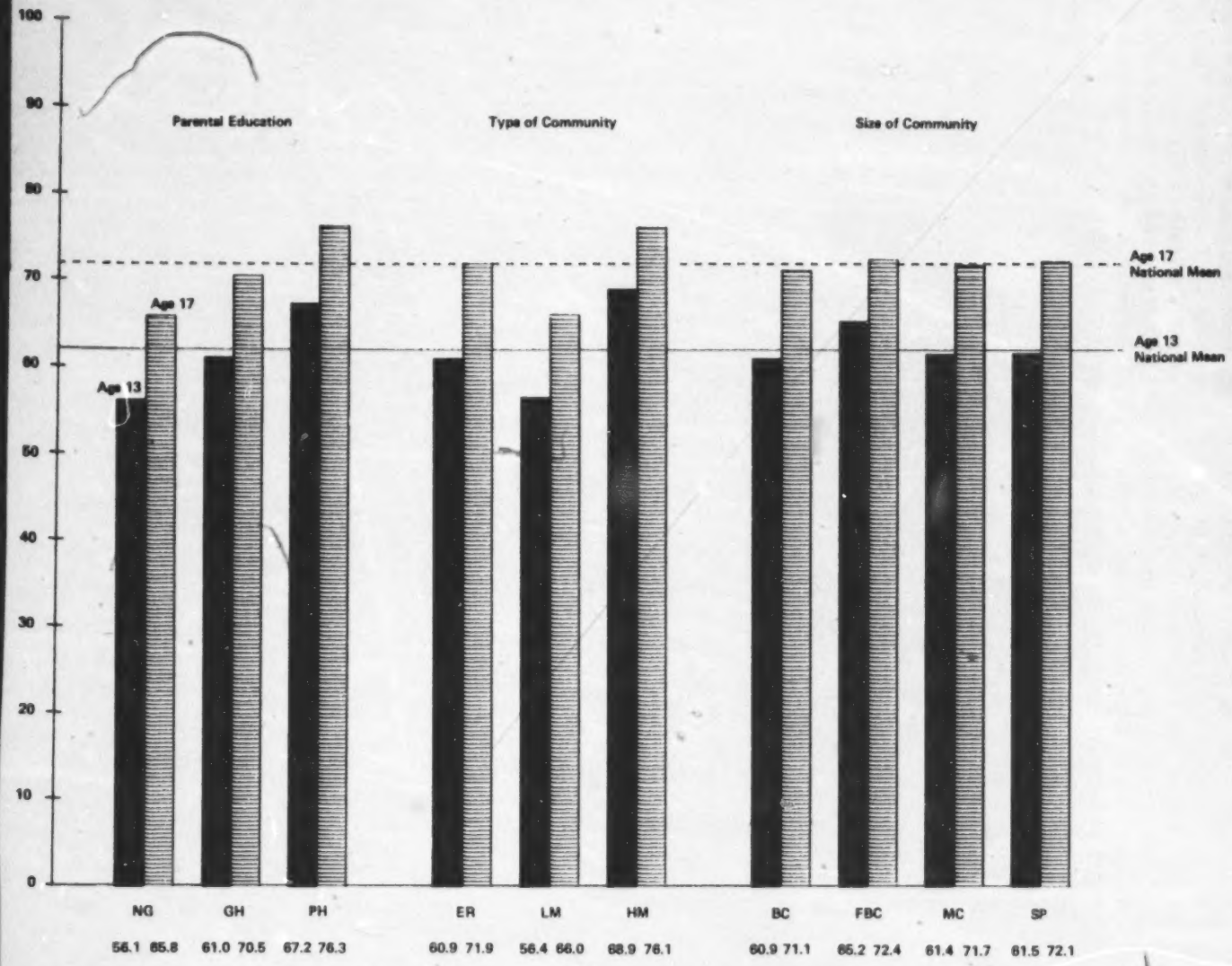


EXHIBIT 22 *(Continued).* **Performance Means on All Citizenship Overlap Items, Ages 13 and 17**
(Number of Items = 192)



10-point gain from age 13 to 17 regardless of the group reported. The consistency of this pattern supports the hypothesis that groups cannot easily make up educational deficits with age. Students living in the fringes around big cities showed a smaller mean increase from the ages of 13 to 17 than students in different-sized communities, however. While students in fringes around big cities performed substantially better than students in the other community groups at age 13, by age 17 students in all community-size groups performed at approximately the same level.

APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS OF REPORTING GROUPS

Age

Nine-year-old students. All persons enrolled in public or private schools and born during the calendar year 1966.

Thirteen-year-old students. All persons enrolled in public or private schools and born during the calendar year 1962.

Seventeen-year-old students. All persons enrolled in public or private schools and born between October 1, 1958, and September 30, 1959.

Region

Respondents live in four regions of the country — Northeast (NE), Southeast (SE), Central (C) and West (W) — as shown on the following map:

Sex

Results are reported for males (M) and females (F) for each group.

Race

Results are reported for blacks (B), whites (W) and Hispanics (H).

Parental Education

These groups are classified by the highest level of education attained by either parent. The respondents reported how much school each parent completed; the highest level attained by either parent is reported.

Not graduated high school (NG). Students who reported that their parents did not graduate from high school.

Graduated high school (GH). Students who reported having at least one parent who graduated from high school.

Post high school (PH). Students who reported having at least one parent who had some post high school education.

Type of Community

The categories within this variable are defined by an occupational profile of the area the school serves, as judged by the school's principal.

Extreme rural (ER). These are areas where a high proportion of the residents are farmers or farm workers. At least some of the area is open country or contains towns of less than

2,500 population; no towns in the area have populations greater than 100,000 or are suburbs of medium or large cities.

Low metro (LM). This indicates low-socioeconomic or impoverished urban communities. In these areas, a high proportion of the residents are on welfare or are not regularly employed. These areas are within cities or residential areas of big cities with populations greater than 200,000.

High metro (HM). This indicates high-socioeconomic or affluent urban and suburban communities. A high proportion of the residents in these areas are professional or managerial. These areas are found in big cities or residential areas of cities with populations greater than 200,000.

Size of Community

The categories within this variable are defined on the basis of the size of the community in which a student's school is located.

Big city (BC). Schools in this category are located in cities having populations greater than 200,000.

Fringes around big cities (FBC). These schools are in the urbanized areas near big cities having populations greater than 200,000.

Medium city (MC). These schools are in cities having populations between 25,000 and 200,000 that are not urbanized areas near big cities.

Smaller places (SP). Schools in this category are located in open country or in places with populations less than 25,000 that are not in urbanized areas near big cities.

Grade Level

The school grades for 9-year-olds, 13-year-olds and in-school 17-year-olds are reported. At each age, grade is reported for levels one through three; the definitions of these levels are:

Grade Level	Age 9	Age 13	Age 17
1	Grade 3	Grade 7	Grade 10
2	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 11
3	Above 4th grade	Above 8th grade	Grade 12

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